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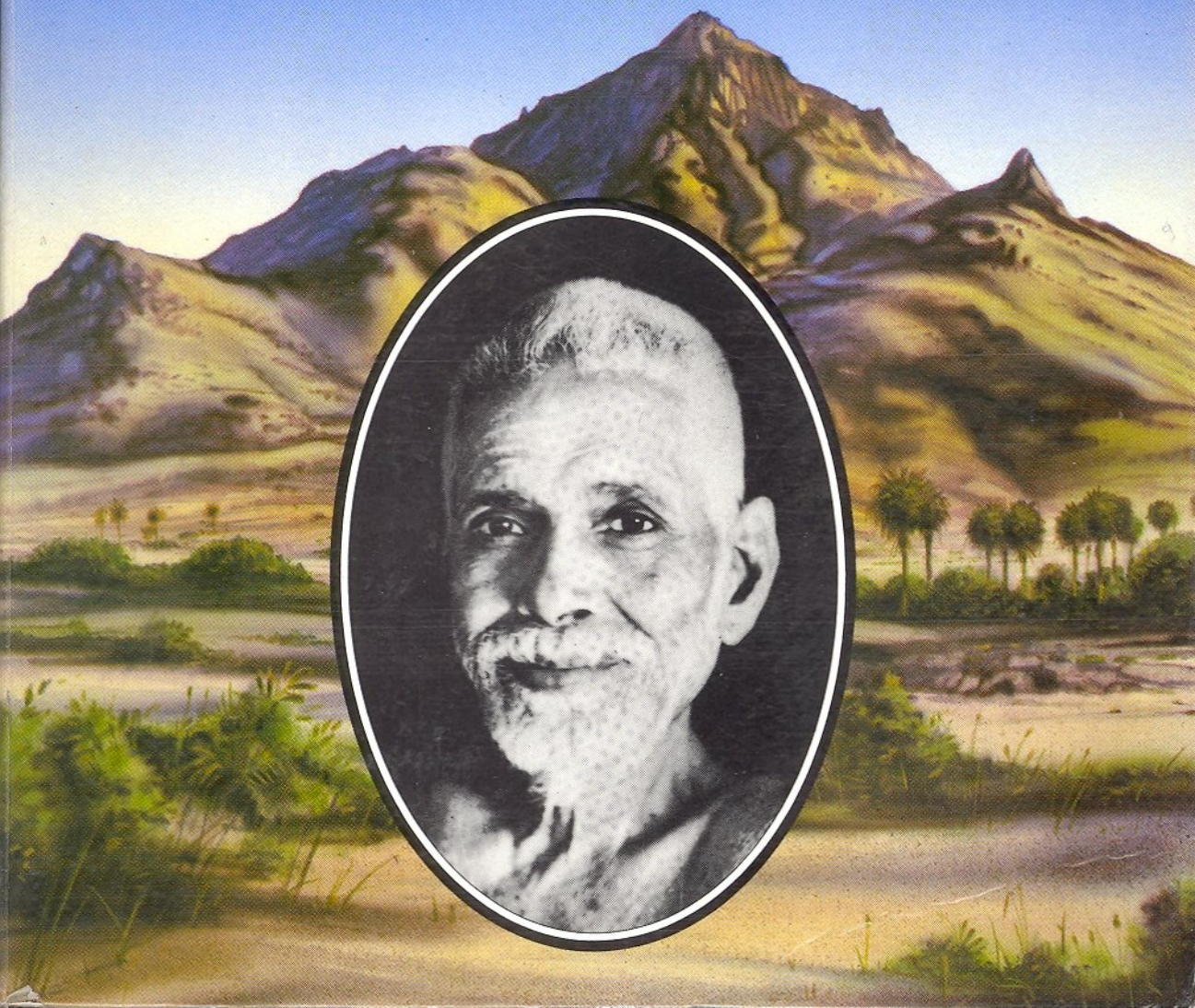
ARKANA

BE AS YOU ARE

THE TEACHINGS OF SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

EDITED BY DAVID GODMAN



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Introduction

In 1896 a sixteen-year-old schoolboy walked out on his family and, driven by an inner compulsion, slowly made his way to Arunachala, a holy mountain and pilgrimage centre in South India. On his arrival he threw away all his money and possessions and abandoned himself to a newly-discovered awareness that his real nature was formless, immanent consciousness. His absorption in this awareness was so intense that he was completely oblivious of his body and the world; insects chewed away portions of his legs, his body wasted away because he was rarely conscious enough to eat and his hair and fingernails grew to unmanageable lengths. After two or three years in this state he began a slow return to physical normality, a process that was not finally completed for several years. His awareness of himself as consciousness was unaffected by this physical transition and it remained continuous and undimmed for the rest of his life. In Hindu parlance he had 'realised the Self'; that is to say, he had realised by direct experience that nothing existed apart from an indivisible and universal consciousness which was experienced in its unmanifest form as beingness or awareness and in its manifest form as the appearance of the universe.

Normally this awareness is only generated after a long and arduous period of spiritual practice but in this case it happened spontaneously, without prior effort or desire. Venkataraman, the sixteen-year-old schoolboy, was alone in an upstairs room of his uncle's house in Madurai (near the southern tip of India) when he was suddenly gripped by an intense fear of death. In the following few minutes he went through a simulated death experience during which he became consciously aware for the first time that his real nature was imperishable and that it was unrelated to the body, the mind or the personality. Many people have reported similar unexpected experiences but they are almost invariably temporary. In Venkataraman's case the experience was permanent and irreversible. From that time on his consciousness of being an

individual person ceased to exist and it never functioned in him again.

Venkataraman told no one about his experience and for six weeks he kept up the appearance of being an ordinary schoolboy. However, he found it an increasingly difficult posture to maintain and at the end of this six week period he abandoned his family and went directly to the holy mountain of Arunachala.

The choice of Arunachala was far from random. Throughout his brief life he had always associated the name of Arunachala with God and it was a major revelation to him when he discovered that it was not some heavenly realm but a tangible earthly entity. The mountain itself had long been regarded by Hindus as a manifestation of Siva, a Hindu God, and in later years Venkataraman often said that it was the spiritual power of Arunachala which had brought about his Self-realisation. His love for the mountain was so great that from the day he arrived in 1896 until his death in 1950 he could never be persuaded to go more than two miles away from its base.

After a few years of living on its slopes his inner awareness began to manifest as an outer spiritual radiance. This radiance attracted a small circle of followers and, although he remained silent for most of the time, he embarked upon a teaching career. One of his earliest followers, impressed by the evident saintliness and wisdom of the young man, decided to rename him Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi – Bhagavan means Lord or God, Sri is an Indian honorific title, Ramana is a contraction of Venkataraman and Maharshi means 'great seer' in Sanskrit. The name found favour with his other followers and it soon became the title by which he became known to the world.

At this stage of his life Sri Ramana was speaking very little and so his teachings were transmitted in an unusual fashion. Instead of giving out verbal instructions he constantly emanated a silent force or power which stilled the minds of those who were attuned to it and occasionally even gave them a direct experience of the state that he himself was perpetually immersed in. In later years he became more willing to give out verbal teachings, but even then, the silent teachings were always available to those who were able to make good use of them. Throughout his life Sri Ramana insisted that this silent flow of power represented his teachings in their most direct and concentrated form. The importance he attached to this is indicated by his frequent statements to the effect

that his verbal teachings were only given out to those who were unable to understand his silence.

As the years passed he became more and more famous. A community grew up around him, thousands of visitors flocked to see him and for the last twenty years of his life he was widely regarded as India's most popular and revered holy man. Some of these thousands were attracted by the peace they felt in his presence, others by the authoritative way in which he guided spiritual seekers and interpreted religious teachings, and some merely came to tell him their problems. Whatever their reasons for coming almost everyone who came into contact with him was impressed by his simplicity and his humbleness. He made himself available to visitors twenty-four hours a day by living and sleeping in a communal hall which was always accessible to everyone, and his only private possessions were a loin-cloth, a water-pot and a walking-stick. Although he was worshipped by thousands as a living God, he refused to allow anyone to treat him as a special person and he always refused to accept anything which could not be shared equally by everyone in his ashram. He shared in the communal work and for many years he rose at 3 a.m. in order to prepare food for the residents of the ashram. His sense of equality was legendary. When visitors came to see him – it made no difference whether they were VIPs, peasants or animals – they would all be treated with equal respect and consideration. His egalitarian concern even extended to the local trees; he discouraged his followers from picking flowers or leaves off them and he tried to ensure that whenever fruit was taken from the ashram trees it was always done in such a way that the tree only suffered a minimum amount of pain.

Throughout this period (1925-50) the centre of ashram life was the small hall where Sri Ramana lived, slept and held court. He spent most of his day sitting in one corner radiating his silent power and simultaneously fielding questions from the constant flow of visitors who descended on him from every corner of the globe. He rarely committed his ideas to paper and so the verbal replies given out during this period (by far the most well-documented of his life) represent the largest surviving source of his teachings.

These verbal teachings flowed authoritatively from his direct knowledge that consciousness was the only existing reality. Consequently, all his explanations and instructions were geared to

convincing his followers that this was their true and natural state. Few of his followers were capable of assimilating this truth in its highest and most undiluted form and so he often adapted his teachings to conform to the limited understanding of the people who came to him for advice. Because of this tendency it is possible to distinguish many different levels of his teachings. At the highest level that could be expressed in words he would say that consciousness alone exists. If this was received with scepticism he would say that awareness of this truth is obscured by the self-limiting ideas of the mind and that if these ideas were abandoned then the reality of consciousness would be revealed. Most of his followers found this high-level approach a little too theoretical – they were so immersed in the self-limiting ideas that Sri Ramana was encouraging them to drop that they felt that the truth about consciousness would only be revealed to them if they underwent a long period of spiritual practice. To satisfy such people Sri Ramana prescribed an innovative method of self-attention which he called self-enquiry. He recommended this technique so often and so vigorously that it was regarded by many people as the most distinctive motif in his teachings.

Even then, many people were not satisfied and they would continue to ask for advice about other methods or try to engage him in theoretical philosophical discussions. With such people Sri Ramana would temporarily abandon his absolute standpoint and give appropriate advice on whatever level it was asked. If he appeared on these occasions to accept and endorse many of the misconceptions which his visitors had about themselves it was only to draw their attention to some aspect of his teachings that he felt would help them to better understand his real views.

Inevitably, this policy of modifying his teachings to meet the needs of different people led to many contradictions. He might, for example, tell one person that the individual self is non-existent and then turn to another person and give a detailed description of how the individual self functions, accumulates *karma* and reincarnates. It is possible for an observer to say that such opposing statements may both be true when seen from different standpoints, but the former statement clearly has more validity when it is viewed from the absolute standpoint of Sri Ramana's own experience. This standpoint, summarised by his statement that consciousness alone exists, is ultimately the only yardstick by which one can realistically assess the relative truth of his widely

differing and contradictory statements. To whatever extent his other statements deviate from this it may be assumed that to that extent they are dilutions of the truth.

Bearing this in mind I have tried to arrange the material in this book in such a way that his highest teachings come first and his least important or most diluted ones last. The only exception is a chapter in which he talks about his silent teachings. It ought to be somewhere near the beginning but I found it more expedient for a variety of reasons to fit it into a section about half-way through the book.

I decided on this overall structure for two reasons. Firstly it gives the reader a chance to gauge the relative importance of the various ideas presented, and secondly, and more importantly, it was Sri Ramana's own preferred method of teaching. When visitors came to see him he would always try to convince them of the truth of his higher teachings and only if they seemed unwilling to accept them would he tone down his answers and speak from a more relative level.

The teachings have been presented in the form of a series of questions and answers in which Sri Ramana outlines his views on various subjects. Each chapter is devoted to a different topic and each topic is prefaced by a few introductory or explanatory remarks. The questions and answers which form the bulk of each chapter have been taken from many sources and assembled in such a way that they give the appearance of being a continuous conversation. I was forced to adopt this method because there are no continuous lengthy conversations available which cover the full spectrum of his views on any particular subject. For those who are interested, the sources of the quotations which make up the conversations are all listed at the end of the book.

Sri Ramana usually answered questions in one of the three vernacular languages of South India: Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam. No tape-recordings were ever made and most of his answers were hurriedly written down in English by his official interpreters. Because some of the interpreters were not completely fluent in English some of the transcriptions were either ungrammatical or written in a kind of stilted English which occasionally makes Sri Ramana sound like a pompous Victorian. I have deviated from the published texts by correcting a few of the worst examples of this kind; in such cases the meaning has not been tampered with, only the mode of expression. I have also contracted some of the

questions and answers in order to eliminate material which digressed too far from the subject under discussion. Throughout the book the questions are prefaced by a 'Q:' and Sri Ramana's answers by an 'A:'.

The original texts from which these conversations are taken are characterised by a luxuriant profusion of capital letters. I have eliminated most of them, leaving only three terms, Guru, Self and Heart, consistently capitalised. Sri Ramana often used these terms as synonyms for consciousness and wherever this meaning is implied I have retained the capitalisation to avoid confusion.

A complete glossary of Sanskrit words which are not translated in the text can be found at the end of the book. The same glossary also includes brief descriptions of unfamiliar people, places and scriptural works which are mentioned in the text. Sri Ramana occasionally used Sanskrit terms in unconventional ways. On the few occasions that he does so in this book I have ignored the standard dictionary definitions and have instead given a definition which more accurately reflects the intended meaning.

PART ONE

The Self

That in which all these worlds seem to exist steadily, that of which all these worlds are a possession, that from which all these worlds rise, that for which all these exist, that by which all these worlds come into existence and that which is indeed all these – that alone is the existing reality. Let us cherish that Self, which is the reality, in the Heart.[1]

CHAPTER 1
The nature of the Self

The essence of Sri Ramana's teachings is conveyed in his frequent assertions that there is a single immanent reality, directly experienced by everyone, which is simultaneously the source, the substance and the real nature of everything that exists. He gave it a number of different names, each one signifying a different aspect of the same indivisible reality. The following classification includes all of his more common synonyms and explains the implications of the various terms used.

1 *The Self* This is the term that he used the most frequently. He defined it by saying that the real Self or real 'I' is, contrary to perceptible experience, not an experience of individuality but a non-personal, all-inclusive awareness. It is not to be confused with the individual self which he said was essentially non-existent, being a fabrication of the mind which obscures the true experience of the real Self. He maintained that the real Self is always present and always experienced but he emphasised that one is only consciously aware of it as it really is when the self-limiting tendencies of the mind have ceased. Permanent and continuous Self-awareness is known as Self-realisation.

2 *Sat-chit-ananda* This is a Sanskrit term which translates as being-consciousness-bliss. Sri Ramana taught that the Self is pure being, a subjective awareness of 'I am' which is completely devoid of the feeling 'I am this' or 'I am that'. There are no subjects or objects in the Self, there is only an awareness of being. Because this awareness is conscious it is also known as consciousness. The direct experience of this consciousness is, according to Sri Ramana, a state of unbroken happiness and so the term *ananda* or bliss is also used to describe it. These three aspects, being, consciousness and bliss, are experienced as a unitary whole and not as

separate attributes of the Self. They are inseparable in the same way that wetness, transparency and liquidity are inseparable properties of water.

3 *God* Sri Ramana maintained that the universe is sustained by the power of the Self. Since theists normally attribute this power to God he often used the word God as a synonym for the Self. He also used the words *Brahman*, the supreme being of Hinduism, and Siva, a Hindu name for God, in the same way. Sri Ramana's God is not a personal God, he is the formless being which sustains the universe. He is not the creator of the universe, the universe is merely a manifestation of his inherent power; he is inseparable from it, but he is not affected by its appearance or its disappearance.

4 *The Heart* Sri Ramana frequently used the Sanskrit word *hridayam* when he was talking about the Self. It is usually translated as 'the Heart' but a more literal translation would be 'this is the centre'. In using this particular term he was not implying that there was a particular location or centre for the Self, he was merely indicating that the Self was the source from which all appearances manifested.

5 *Jnana* The experience of the Self is sometimes called *jnana* or knowledge. This term should not be taken to mean that there is a person who has knowledge of the Self, because in the state of Self-awareness there is no localised knower and there is nothing that is separate from the Self that can be known. True knowledge, or *jnana*, is not an object of experience, nor is it an understanding of a state which is different and apart from the subject knower; it is a direct and knowing awareness of the one reality in which subjects and objects have ceased to exist. One who is established in this state is known as a *jnani*.

6 *Turiya and turyatita* Hindu philosophy postulates three alternating levels of relative consciousness – waking, dream and deep sleep. Sri Ramana stated that the Self was the underlying reality which supported the appearance of the other three temporary states. Because of this he sometimes called the Self *turiya avastha* or the fourth state. He also occasionally used the word *turiyatita*, meaning 'transcending the fourth', to indicate that there are not really four states but only one real transcendental state.

7 *Other terms* Three other terms for the Self are worth noting. Sri Ramana often emphasised that the Self was one's real and natural state of being, and for this reason, he occasionally employed the terms *sahaja sthiti*, meaning the natural state, and *swarupa*, meaning real form or real nature. He also used the word 'silence' to indicate that the Self was a silent thought-free state of undisturbed peace and total stillness.

Q: *What is reality?*

A: Reality must be always real. It is not with forms and names. That which underlies these is the reality. It underlies limitations, being itself limitless. It is not bound. It underlies unrealities, itself being real. Reality is that which is. It is as it is. It transcends speech. It is beyond the expressions 'existence, non-existence', etc.[1]

The reality which is the mere consciousness that remains when ignorance is destroyed along with knowledge of objects, alone is the Self [*atma*]. In that *Brahma-swarupa* [real form of *Brahman*], which is abundant Self-awareness, there is not the least ignorance.

The reality which shines fully, without misery and without a body, not only when the world is known but also when the world is not known, is your real form [*nija-swarupa*].

The radiance of consciousness-bliss, in the form of one awareness shining equally within and without, is the supreme and blissful primal reality. Its form is silence and it is declared by *jnanis* to be the final and unobstructable state of true knowledge [*jnana*].

Know that *jnana* alone is non-attachment; *jnana* alone is purity; *jnana* is the attainment of God; *jnana* which is devoid of forgetfulness of Self alone is immortality; *jnana* alone is everything.[2]

Q: *What is this awareness and how can one obtain and cultivate it?*

A: You are awareness. Awareness is another name for you.

Since you are awareness there is no need to attain or cultivate it. All that you have to do is to give up being aware of other things, that is of the not-Self. If one gives up being aware of them then pure awareness alone remains, and that is the Self.[3]

Q: *If the Self is itself aware, why am I not aware of it even now?*

A: There is no duality. Your present knowledge is due to the ego and is only relative. Relative knowledge requires a subject and an object, whereas the awareness of the Self is absolute and requires no object.

Remembrance also is similarly relative, requiring an object to be remembered and a subject to remember. When there is no duality, who is to remember whom?[4]

The Self is ever-present. Each one wants to know the Self. What kind of help does one require to know oneself? People want to see the Self as something new. But it is eternal and remains the same all along. They desire to see it as a blazing light etc. How can it be so? It is not light, not darkness. It is only as it is. It cannot be defined. The best definition is 'I am that I am'. The *srutis* [scriptures] speak of the Self as being the size of one's thumb, the tip of the hair, an electric spark, vast, subtler than the subtlest, etc. They have no foundation in fact. It is only being, but different from the real and the unreal; it is knowledge, but different from knowledge and ignorance. How can it be defined at all? It is simply being.[5]

Q: *When a man realises the Self, what will he see?*

A: There is no seeing. Seeing is only being. The state of Self-realisation, as we call it, is not attaining something new or reaching some goal which is far away, but simply being that which you always are and which you always have been. All that is needed is that you give up your realisation of the not-true as true. All of us are regarding as real that which is not real. We have only to give up this practice on our part. Then we shall realise the Self as the Self; in other words, 'Be the Self'. At one stage you will laugh at yourself for trying to discover the Self which is so self-evident. So, what can we say to this question?

That stage transcends the seer and the seen. There is no seer there to see anything. The seer who is seeing all this now ceases to exist and the Self alone remains.[6]

Q: *How to know this by direct experience?*

A: If We talk of knowing the Self, there must be two selves,

one a knowing self, another the self which is known, and the process of knowing. The state we call realisation is simply being oneself, not knowing anything or becoming anything. If one has realised, one is that which alone is and which alone has always been. One cannot describe that state. One can only be that. Of course, we loosely talk of Self-realisation, for want of a better term. How to 'real-ise' or make real that which alone is real?[7]

Q: *You sometimes say the Self is silence. Why is this?*

A: For those who live in Self as the beauty devoid of thought, there is nothing which should be thought of. That which should be adhered to is only the experience of silence, because in that supreme state nothing exists to be attained other than oneself.[8]

Q: *What is* mouna *[silence]?*

A: That state which transcends speech and thought is *mouna.*[9] That which is, is *mouna.* How can *mouna* be explained in words?[10]

Sages say that the state in which the thought 'I' [the ego] does not rise even in the least, alone is Self [*swarupa*] which is silence [*mouna*]. That silent Self alone is God; Self alone is the *jiva* [individual soul]. Self alone is this ancient world.

All other knowledges are only petty and trivial knowledges; the experience of silence alone is the real and perfect knowledge. Know that the many objective differences are not real but are mere superimpositions on Self, which is the form of true knowledge.[11]

Q: *As the bodies and the selves animating them are everywhere actually observed to be innumerable how can it be said that the Self is only one?*

A: If the idea 'I am the body' is accepted, the selves are multiple. The state in which this idea vanishes is the Self since in that state there are no other objects. It is for this reason that the Self is regarded as one only.[12]

Since the body itself does not exist in the natural outlook of the real Self, but only in the extroverted outlook of the mind which is deluded by the power of illusion, to call Self, the space of consciousness, *dehi* [the possessor of the body] is wrong.

The world does not exist without the body, the body never exists without the mind, the mind never exists without consciousness and consciousness never exists without the reality.

For the wise one who has known Self by diving within himself, there is nothing other than Self to be known. Why?

Because since the ego which identifies the form of a body as 'I' has perished, he [the wise one] is the formless existence-consciousness.[13]

The *jnani* [one who has realised the Self] knows he is the Self and that nothing, neither his body nor anything else, exists but the Self. To such a one what difference could the presence or absence of a body make?

It is false to speak of realisation. What is there to realise? The real is as it is always. We are not creating anything new or achieving something which we did not have before. The illustration given in books is this. We dig a well and create a huge pit. The space in the pit or well has not been created by us. We have just removed the earth which was filling the space there. The space was there then and is also there now. Similarly we have simply to throw out all the age-long *samskaras* [innate tendencies] which are inside us. When all of them have been given up, the Self will shine alone.[14]

Q: *But how to do this and attain liberation?*

A: Liberation is our very nature. We are that. The very fact that we wish for liberation shows that freedom from all bondage is our real nature. It is not to be freshly acquired. All that is necessary is to get rid of the false notion that we are bound. When we achieve that, there will be no desire or thought of any sort. So long as one desires liberation, so long, you may take it, one is in bondage.[15]

Q: *For one who has realized his Self, it is said that he will not have the three states of wakefulness, dream and deep sleep. Is that a fact?*

A: What makes you say that they do not have the three states? In saying 'I had a dream; I was in deep sleep; I am awake', you must admit that you were there in all the three states. That makes it clear that you were there all the time. If you remain as you are now, you are in the wakeful state; this becomes hidden in the dream state; and the dream state disappears when you are in deep sleep. You were there then, you are there now, and you are there at all times. The three states come and go, but you are always there. It is like a cinema. The screen is always there but several types of pictures appear on the screen and then disappear. Nothing sticks to the screen, it remains a screen. Similarly, you remain your own Self in all the three states. If you know that, the three states will not trouble you, just as the pictures which appear on the screen do not stick to it. On the screen, you sometimes see

a huge ocean with endless waves; that disappears. Another time, you see fire spreading all around; that too disappears. The screen is there on both occasions. Did the screen get wet with the water or did it get burned by the fire? Nothing affected the screen. In the same way, the things that happen during the wakeful, dream and sleep states do not affect you at all; you remain your own Self.

Q: *Does that mean that, although people have all three states, wakefulness, dream and deep sleep, these do not affect them?*

A: Yes, that is it. All these states come and go. The Self is not bothered; it has only one state.

Q: *Does that mean that such a person will be in this world merely as a witness?*

A: That is so; for this very thing, Vidyaranya, in the tenth chapter of the *Panchadasi*, gives as example the light that is kept on the stage of a theatre. When a drama is being played, the light is there, which illuminates, without any distinction, all the actors, whether they be kings or servants or dancers, and also all the audience. That light will be there before the drama begins, during the performance and also after the performance is over. Similarly, the light within, that is, the Self, gives light to the ego, the intellect, the memory and the mind without itself being subject to processes of growth and decay. Although during deep sleep and other states there is no feeling of the ego, that Self remains attributeless, and continues to shine of itself.[16]

Actually, the idea of the Self being the witness is only in the mind; it is not the absolute truth of the Self. Witnessing is relative to objects witnessed. Both the witness and his object are mental creations.[17]

Q: *How are the three states of consciousness inferior in degree of reality to the fourth [*turiya*]? What is the actual relation between these three states and the fourth?*

A: There is only one state, that of consciousness or awareness or existence. The three states of waking, dream and sleep cannot be real. They simply come and go. The real will always exist. The 'I' or existence that alone persists in all the three states is real. The other three are not real and so it is not possible to say they have such and such a degree of reality. We may roughly put it like this. Existence or consciousness is the only reality. Consciousness plus waking, we call waking. Consciousness plus sleep, we call sleep. Consciousness plus dream, we call dream. Consciousness is the screen on which all the pictures come and go. The screen is real,

the pictures are mere shadows on it. Because by long habit we have been regarding these three states as real, we call the state of mere awareness or consciousness the fourth. There is however no fourth state, but only one state.[18]

There is no difference between dream and the waking state except that the dream is short and the waking long. Both are the result of the mind. Because the waking state is long, we imagine that it is our real state. But, as a matter of fact, our real state is *turiya* or the fourth state which is always as it is and knows nothing of the three states of waking, dream or sleep. Because we call these three *avasthas* [states] we call the fourth state also *turiya avastha*. But is it not an *avastha*, but the real and natural state of the Self. When this is realised, we know it is not a *turiya* or fourth state, for a fourth state is only relative, but *turiyatita*, the transcendent state.[19]

Q: *But why should these three states come and go on the real state or the screen of the Self?*

A: Who puts this question? Does the Self say these states come and go? It is the seer who says these come and go. The seer and the seen together constitute the mind. See if there is such a thing as the mind. Then, the mind merges in the Self, and there is neither the seer nor the seen. So the real answer to your question is, 'They neither come nor go.' The Self alone remains as it ever is. The three states owe their existence to non-enquiry and enquiry puts an end to them. However much one may explain, the fact will not become clear till one attains Self-realisation and wonders how one was blind to the self-evident and only existence so long.

Q: *What is the difference between the mind and the Self?*

A: There is no difference. The mind turned inwards is the Self; turned outwards, it becomes the ego and all the world. Cotton made into various clothes we call by various names. Gold made into various ornaments, we call by various names. But all the clothes are cotton and all the ornaments gold. The one is real, the many are mere names and forms.

But the mind does not exist apart from the Self, that is, it has no independent existence. The Self exists without the mind, never the mind without the Self.[20]

Q: Brahman *is said to be* sat-chit-ananda. *What does that mean?*

A: Yes. That is so. That which is, is only *sat*. That is called *Brahman*. The lustre of *sat* is *chit* and its nature is *ananda*. These

are not different from *sat*. All the three together are known as *sat-chit-ananda*.[21]

Q: *As the Self is existence* [sat] *and consciousness* [chit] *what is the reason for describing it as different from the existent and the non-existent, the sentient and the insentient?*

A: Although the Self is real, as it comprises everything, it does not give room for questions involving duality about its reality or unreality. Therefore it is said to be different from the real and the unreal. Similarly, even though it is consciousness, since there is nothing for it to know or to make itself known to, it is said to be different from the sentient and the insentient.[22]

Sat-chit-ananda is said to indicate that the supreme is not *asat* [different from being], not *achit* [different from consciousness] and not an *anananda* [different from happiness]. Because we are in the phenomenal world we speak of the Self as *sat-chit-ananda*.[23]

Q: *In what sense is happiness or bliss* [ananda] *our real nature?*

A: Perfect bliss is *Brahman*. Perfect peace is of the Self. That alone exists and is consciousness.[24] That which is called happiness is only the nature of Self; Self is not other than perfect happiness. That which is called happiness alone exists. Knowing that fact and abiding in the state of Self, enjoy bliss eternally.[25]

If a man thinks that his happiness is due to external causes and his possessions, it is reasonable to conclude that his happiness must increase with the increase of possessions and diminish in proportion to their diminution. Therefore if he is devoid of possessions, his happiness should be nil. What is the real experience of man? Does it conform to this view?

In deep sleep man is devoid of possessions, including his own body. Instead of being unhappy he is quite happy. Everyone desires to sleep soundly. The conclusion is that happiness is inherent in man and is not due to external causes. One must realise the Self in order to open the store of unalloyed happiness.[26]

Q: *Sri Bhagavan speaks of the Heart as the seat of consciousness and as identical with the Self. What does the Heart exactly signify?*

A: Call it by any name, God, Self, the Heart or the seat of consciousness, it is all the same. The point to be grasped is this, that Heart means the very core of one's being, the centre, without which there is nothing whatever.[27]

The Heart is not physical, it is spiritual. *Hridayam* equals *hrit* plus *ayam*; it means 'this is the centre'. It is that from which thoughts arise, on which they subsist and where they are resolved. The thoughts are the content of the mind and they shape the universe. The Heart is the centre of all. That from which beings come into existence is said to be *Brahman* in the *Upanishads*. That is the Heart. *Brahman* is the Heart.[28]

Q: *How to realise the Heart?*

A: There is no one who even for a moment fails to experience the Self. For no one admits that he ever stands apart from the Self. He is the Self. The Self is the Heart.[29]

The Heart is the centre from which everything springs. Because you see the world, the body and so on, it is said that there is a centre for these, which is called the Heart. When you are in the Heart, the Heart is known to be neither the centre nor the circumference. There is nothing else apart from it.[30]

The consciousness which is the real existence and which does not go out to know those things which are other than Self, alone is the Heart. Since the truth of Self is known only to that consciousness, which is devoid of activity, that consciousness which always remains attending to Self alone is the shining of clear knowledge.[31]

CHAPTER 2
Self-awareness and Self-ignorance

Sri Ramana occasionally indicated that there were three classes of spiritual aspirants. The most advanced realise the Self as soon as they are told about its real nature. Those in the second class need to reflect on it for some time before Self-awareness becomes firmly established. Those in the third category are less fortunate since they usually need many years of intensive spiritual practice to achieve the goal of Self-realisation. Sri Ramana sometimes used a metaphor of combustion to describe the three levels: gunpowder ignites with a single spark, charcoal needs the application of heat for a short time, and wet coal needs to dry out and heat up over a long period of time before it will begin to burn.

For the benefit of those in the top two categories Sri Ramana taught that the Self alone exists and that it can be directly and consciously experienced merely by ceasing to pay attention to the wrong ideas we have about ourselves. These wrong ideas he collectively called the 'not-Self' since they are an imaginary accretion of wrong notions and misperceptions which effectively veil the true experience of the real Self. The principal misperception is the idea that the Self is limited to the body and the mind. As soon as one ceases to imagine that one is an individual person, inhabiting a particular body, the whole superstructure of wrong ideas collapses and is replaced by a conscious and permanent awareness of the real Self.

At this level of the teaching there is no question of effort or practice. All that is required is an understanding that the Self is not a goal to be attained, it is merely the awareness that prevails when all the limiting ideas about the not-Self have been discarded.

Q: *How can I attain Self-realisation?*

A: Realisation is nothing to be gained afresh; it is already there. All that is necessary is to get rid of the thought 'I have not realised'.

Stillness or peace is realisation. There is no moment when the Self is not. So long as there is doubt or the feeling of non-realisation, the attempt should be made to rid oneself of these thoughts. They are due to the identification of the Self with the not-Self. When the not-Self disappears, the Self alone remains. To make room, it is enough that objects be removed. Room is not brought in from elsewhere.

Q: *Since realisation is not possible without* vasana-kshaya *[destruction of mental tendencies], how am I to realise that state in which the tendencies are effectively destroyed?*

A: You are in that state now.

Q: *Does it mean that by holding on to the Self, the* vasanas *[mental tendencies] should be destroyed as and when they emerge?*

A: They will themselves be destroyed if you remain as you are.

Q: *How shall I reach the Self?*

A: There is no reaching the Self. If Self were to be reached, it would mean that the Self is not here and now and that it is yet to be obtained. What is got afresh will also be lost. So it will be impermanent. What is not permanent is not worth striving for. So I say the Self is not reached. You are the Self, you are already that.

The fact is, you are ignorant of your blissful state. Ignorance supervenes and draws a veil over the pure Self which is bliss. Attempts are directed only to remove this veil of ignorance which is merely wrong knowledge. The wrong knowledge is the false identification of the Self with the body and the mind. This false identification must go, and then the Self alone remains.

Therefore realisation is for everyone; realisation makes no difference between the aspirants. This very doubt, whether you can realise, and the notion 'I-have-not-realised' are themselves the obstacles. Be free from these obstacles also.[1]

Q: *How long does it take to reach* mukti *[liberation]?*

A: *Mukti* is not to be gained in the future. It is there for ever, here and now.

Q: *I agree, but I do not experience it.*

A: The experience is here and now. One cannot deny one's own Self.

Q: *That means existence and not happiness.*

A: Existence is the same as happiness and happiness is the same as being. The word *mukti* is so provoking. Why should one seek it? One believes that there is bondage and therefore seeks liberation. But the fact is that there is no bondage but only liberation. Why call it by a name and seek it?

Q: *True – but we are ignorant.*

A: Only remove ignorance. That is all there is to be done.

All questions relating to *mukti* are inadmissible. *Mukti* means release from bondage which implies the present existence of bondage. There is no bondage and therefore no *mukti* either.[2]

Q: *Of what nature is the realisation of westerners who relate that they have had flashes of cosmic consciousness?*

A: It came as a flash and disappeared as such. That which has a beginning must also end. Only when the ever-present consciousness is realised will it be permanent. Consciousness is indeed always with us. Everyone knows 'I am'. No one can deny his own being. The man in deep sleep is not aware; while awake he seems to be aware. But it is the same person. There is no change in the one who slept and the one who is now awake. In deep sleep he was not aware of his body and so there was no body-consciousness. In the wakeful state he is aware of his body and so there is body-consciousness. Therefore the difference lies in the emergence of body-consciousness and not in any change in the real consciousness.

The body and body-consciousness arise together and sink together. All this amounts to saying that there are no limitations in deep sleep, whereas there are limitations in the waking state. These limitations are the bondage. The feeling 'The body is I' is the error. This false sense of 'I' must go. The real 'I' is always there. It is here and now. It never appears anew and disappears again. That which is must also persist for ever. That which appears anew will also be lost. Compare deep sleep and waking. The body appears in one state but not in the other. Therefore the body will be lost. The consciousness was pre-existent and will survive the body.

There is no one who does not say 'I am'. The wrong knowledge of 'I am the body' is the cause of all the mischief. This wrong knowledge must go. That is realisation. Realisation is not acquisition of anything new nor is it a new faculty. It is only removal of all camouflage.

The ultimate truth is so simple. It is nothing more than being in the pristine state. This is all that need be said.[3]

Q: *Is one nearer to pure consciousness in deep sleep than in the waking state?*

A: The sleep, dream and waking states are mere phenomena

appearing on the Self which is itself stationary. It is also a state of simple awareness. Can anyone remain away from the Self at any moment? This question can arise only if that were possible.

Q: *Is it not often said that one is nearer pure consciousness in deep sleep than in the waking state?*

A: The question may as well be 'Am I nearer to myself in my sleep than in my waking state?'

The Self is pure consciousness. No one can ever be away from the Self. The question is possible only if there is duality. But there is no duality in the state of pure consciousness.

The same person sleeps, dreams and wakes up. The waking state is considered to be full of beautiful and interesting things. The absence of such experience makes one say that the sleep state is dull. Before we proceed further let us make this point clear. Do you not admit that you exist in your sleep?

Q: *Yes, I do.*

A: You are the same person that is now awake. Is it not so?

Q: *Yes.*

A: So there is a continuity in the sleep and the waking states. What is that continuity? It is only the state of pure being.

There is a difference in the two states. What is that difference? The incidents, namely, the body, the world and objects appear in the waking state but they disappear in sleep.

Q: *But I am not aware in my sleep.*

A: True, there is no awareness of the body or of the world. But you must exist in your sleep in order to say now 'I was not aware in my sleep'. Who says so now? It is the wakeful person. The sleeper cannot say so. That is to say, the individual who is now identifying the Self with the body says that such awareness did not exist in sleep.

Because you identify yourself with the body, you see the world around you and say that the waking state is filled with beautiful and interesting things. The sleep state appears dull because you were not there as an individual and therefore these things were not. But what is the fact? There is the continuity of being in all the three states, but no continuity of the individual and the objects.

Q: *Yes.*

A: That which is continuous is also enduring, that is permanent. That which is discontinuous is transitory.

Q: *Yes.*

A: Therefore the state of being is permanent and the body and the world are not. They are fleeting phenomena passing on the screen of being-consciousness which is eternal and stationary.

Q: *Relatively speaking, is not the sleep state nearer to pure consciousness than the waking state?*

A: Yes, in this sense: when passing from sleep to waking the 'I'-thought [individual self] must start and the mind must come into play. Then thoughts arise and the functions of the body come into operation. All these together make us say that we are awake. The absence of all this evolution is the characteristic of sleep and therefore it is nearer to pure consciousness than the waking state.

But one should not therefore desire to be always in sleep. In the first place it is impossible, for it will necessarily alternate with the other states. Secondly it cannot be the state of bliss in which the *jnani* is, for his state is permanent and not alternating. Moreover, the sleep state is not recognised to be one of awareness by people, but the sage is always aware. Thus the sleep state differs from the state in which the sage is established.

Still more, the sleep state is free from thoughts and their impression on the individual. It cannot be altered by one's will because effort is impossible in that condition. Although nearer to pure consciousness, it is not fit for efforts to realise the Self.[4]

Q: *Is not the realisation of one's absolute being, that is,* Brahma-jnana, *something quite unattainable for a layman like me?*

A: *Brahma-jnana* is not a knowledge to be acquired, so that acquiring it one may obtain happiness. It is one's ignorant outlook that one should give up. The Self you seek to know is truly yourself. Your supposed ignorance causes you needless grief like that of the ten foolish men who grieved at the loss of the tenth man who was never lost.

The ten foolish men in the parable forded a stream and on reaching the other shore wanted to make sure that all of them had in fact safely crossed the stream. One of the ten began to count, but while counting the others left himself out. 'I see only nine; sure enough, we have lost one. Who can it be?' he said. 'Did you count correctly?' asked another, and did the counting himself. But he too counted only nine. One after the other each of the ten counted only nine, missing himself. 'We are only nine', they all agreed, 'but who is the missing one?' they asked themselves. Every effort they made to discover the 'missing' individual failed. 'Whoever he is that is drowned', said the most sentimental of the

ren fools, 'we have lost him.' So saying he burst into tears, and the others followed suit.

Seeing them weeping on the river bank, a sympathetic wayfarer enquired about the cause. They related what had happened and said that even after counting themselves several times they could find no more than nine. On hearing the story, but seeing all the ten before him, the wayfarer guessed what had happened. In order to make them know for themselves they were really ten, that all of them had survived the crossing, he told them, 'Let each of you count for himself but one after the other serially, one, two, three and so on, while I shall give you each a blow so that all of you may be sure of having been included in the count, and included only once. The tenth missing man will then be found.' Hearing this they rejoiced at the prospect of finding their 'lost' comrade and accepted the method suggested by the wayfarer.

While the kind wayfarer gave a blow to each of the ten in turn, he that got the blow counted himself aloud. 'Ten,' said the last man as he got the last blow in his turn. Bewildered they looked at one another, 'We are ten,' they said with one voice and thanked the wayfarer for having removed their grief.

That is the parable. From where was the tenth man brought in? Was he ever lost? By knowing that he had been there all the while, did they learn anything new? The cause of their grief was not the real loss of anyone, it was their own ignorance, or rather, their mere supposition that one of them was lost.

Such is the case with you. Truly there is no cause for you to be miserable and unhappy. You yourself impose limitations on your true nature of infinite being, and then weep that you are but a finite creature. Then you take up this or that spiritual practice to transcend the non-existent limitations. But if your spiritual practice itself assumes the existence of the limitations, how can it help you to transcend them?

Hence I say know that you are really the infinite pure being, the Self. You are always that Self and nothing but that Self. Therefore, you can never be really ignorant of the Self. Your ignorance is merely an imaginary ignorance, like the ignorance of the ten fools about the lost tenth man. It is this ignorance that caused them grief.

Know then that true knowledge does not create a new being for you, it only removes your ignorant ignorance. Bliss is not added to your nature, it is merely revealed as your true natural state, eternal

and imperishable. The only way to be rid of your grief is to know and be the Self. How can this be unattainable?[5]

Q: *However often Bhagavan teaches us, we are not able to understand.*

A: People say that they are not able to know the Self that is all pervading. What can I do? Even the smallest child says, 'I exist; I do; this is mine.' So, everyone understands that the thing 'I' is always existent. It is only when that 'I' is there that there is the feeling that you are the body, he is Venkanna, this is Ramanna and so on. To know that the one that is always visible is one's own Self, is it necessary to search with a candle? To say that we do not know the *atma swarupa* [the real nature of the Self] which is not different but which is in one's own Self is like saying, 'I do not know myself.'[6]

Q: *But how is one to reach this state?*

A: There is no goal to be reached. There is nothing to be attained. You are the Self. You exist always. Nothing more can be predicated of the Self than that it exists. Seeing God or the Self is only being the Self or yourself. Seeing is being. You, being the Self, want to know how to attain the Self. It is something like a man being at Ramanasramam asking how many ways there are to reach Ramanasramam and which is the best way for him. All that is required of you is to give up the thought that you are this body and to give up all thoughts of the external things or the not-Self.[7]

Q: *What is the ego-self? How is it related to the real Self?*

A: The ego-Self appears and disappears and is transitory, whereas the real Self is permanent. Though you are actually the true Self you wrongly identify the real Self with the ego-self.

Q: *How does the mistake come about?*

A: See if it has come about.

Q: *One has to sublimate the ego-self into the true Self.*

A: The ego-self does not exist at all.

Q: *Why does it give us trouble?*

A: To whom is the trouble? The trouble also is imagined. Trouble and pleasure are only for the ego.

Q: *Why is the world so wrapped up in ignorance?*

A: Take care of yourself. Let the world take care of itself. See your Self. If you are the body there is the gross world also. If you are spirit all is spirit alone.

Q: *It will hold good for the individual, but what of the rest?*

A: Do it first and then see if the question arises afterwards.

Q: *Is there* avidya *[ignorance]?*

A: For whom is it?

Q: *For the ego-self.*

A: Yes, for the ego. Remove the ego and *avidya* is gone. Look for it, the ego vanishes and the real Self alone remains. The ego professing *avidya* is not to be seen. There is no *avidya* in reality. All *sastras* [scriptures] are meant to disprove the existence of *avidya.*

Q: *How did the ego arise?*

A: Ego is not. Otherwise do you admit of two selves? How can there be *avidya* in the absence of the ego? If you begin to enquire, the *avidya,* which is already non-existent, will be found not to be, or you will say it has fled away.

Ignorance pertains to the ego. Why do you think of the ego and also suffer? What is ignorance again? It is that which is non-existent. However the worldly life requires the hypothesis of *avidya. Avidya* is only our ignorance and nothing more. It is ignorance or forgetfulness of the Self. Can there be darkness before the sun? Similarly, can there be ignorance before the self-evident and self-luminous Self? If you know the Self there will be no darkness, no ignorance and no misery.

It is the mind which feels the trouble and the misery. Darkness never comes nor goes. See the sun and there is no darkness. Similarly, see the Self and *avidya* will be found not to exist.[8]

Q: *How has the unreal come? Can the unreal spring from the real?*

A: See if it has sprung. There is no such thing as the unreal, from another standpoint. The Self alone exists. When you try to trace the ego, which is the basis of the perception of the world and everything else, you find the ego does not exist at all and neither does all this creation that you see.[9]

Q: *It is cruel of God's* leela *[play] to make the knowledge of the Self so hard.*

A: Knowing the Self is being the Self, and being means existence, one's own existence. No one denies one's existence any more than one denies one's eyes, although one cannot see them. The trouble lies with your desire to objectify the Self, in the same way as you objectify your eyes when you place a mirror before them. You have been so accustomed to objectivity that you have lost the knowledge of yourself, simply because the Self cannot be objectified. Who is to know the Self? Can the insentient body know it? All the time you speak and think of your 'I', yet when questioned you deny knowledge of it. You are the Self, yet you ask how to know the Self. Where then is God's *leela* and where is its cruelty? Because of this denial of the Self by people the *sastras* speak of *maya, leela,* etc.[10]

Q: *Does my realisation help others?*

A: Yes, certainly. It is the best help possible. But there are no others to be helped. For a realised being sees only the Self, just like a goldsmith estimating the gold in various items of jewellery sees only gold. When you identify yourself with the body then only the forms and shapes are there. But when you transcend your body the others disappear along with your body-consciousness.

Q: *Is it so with plants, trees, etc.?*

A: Do they exist at all apart from the Self? Find it out. You think that you see them. The thought is projected out from the Self. Find out from where it rises. Thoughts will cease to rise and the Self alone will remain.

Q: *I understand theoretically. But they are still there.*

A: Yes. It is like a cinema-show. There is the light on the screen and the shadows flitting across it impress the audience as the enactment of some piece. If in the same play an audience also is shown on the screen as part of the performance, the seer and the seen will then both be on the screen. Apply it to yourself. You are the screen, the Self has created the ego, the ego has its accretions of thoughts which are displayed as the world, the trees and the plants of which you are asking. In reality, all these are nothing but the Self. If you see the Self, the same will be found to be all, everywhere and always. Nothing but the Self exists.

Q: *Yes, I still understand only theoretically. Yet the answers are simple, beautiful and convincing.*

A: Even the thought 'I do not realise' is a hindrance. In fact, the Self alone is.[11]

Our real nature is *mukti.* But we are imagining we are bound and are making various, strenuous attempts to become free, while we are all the while free. This will be understood only when we reach that stage. We will be surprised that we were frantically trying to attain something which we have always been and are. An illustration will make this clear. A man goes to sleep in this hall. He dreams he has gone on a world tour, is roaming over hill and dale, forest and country, desert and sea, across various continents and after many years of weary and strenuous travel, returns to this

country, reaches Tiruvannamalai, enters the ashram and walks into the hall. Just at that moment he wakes up and finds he has not moved an inch but was sleeping where he lay down. He has not returned after great effort to this hall, but is and always has been in the hall. It is exactly like that. If it is asked, 'Why being free do we imagine that we are bound?' I answer, 'Why being in the hall did you imagine you were on a world adventure, crossing hill and dale, desert and sea? It is all mind or *maya* [illusion].'[12]

Q: *How then does ignorance of this one and only reality unhappily arise in the case of the* ajnani *[one who has not realised the Self]?*

A: The *ajnani* sees only the mind which is a mere reflection of the light of pure consciousness arising from the Heart. Of the Heart itself he is ignorant. Why? Because his mind is extroverted and has never sought its source.

Q: *What prevents the infinite, undifferentiated light of consciousness arising from the Heart from revealing itself to the* ajnani*?*

A: Just as water in a pot reflects the enormous sun within the narrow limits of the pot, even so the *vasanas* or latent tendencies of the mind of the individual, acting as the reflecting medium, catch the all-pervading, infinite light of consciousness arising from the Heart. The form of this reflection is the phenomenon called the mind. Seeing only this reflection, the *ajnani* is deluded into the belief that he is a finite being, the *jiva*, the individual self.[13]

Q: *What are the obstacles which hinder realisation of the Self?*

A: They are habits of mind [*vasanas*].

Q: *How to overcome the mental habits* [vasanas]*?*

A: By realising the Self.

Q: *This is a vicious circle.*

A: It is the ego which raises such difficulties, creating obstacles and then suffering from the perplexity of apparent paradoxes. Find out who makes the enquiries and the Self will be found.[14]

Q: *Why is this mental bondage so persistent?*

A: The nature of bondage is merely the rising, ruinous thought 'I am different from the reality'. Since one surely cannot remain separate from the reality, reject that thought whenever it rises.[15]

Q: *Why do I never remember that I am the Self?*

A: People speak of memory and oblivion of the fullness of the Self. Oblivion and memory are only thought-forms. They will alternate so long as there are thoughts. But reality lies beyond these. Memory or oblivion must be dependent on something. That something must be foreign to the Self as well, otherwise there would not be oblivion. That upon which memory and oblivion depend is the idea of the individual self. When one looks for it, this individual 'I' is not found because it is not real. Hence this 'I' is synonymous with illusion or ignorance (*maya, avidya* or *ajnana*]. To know that there never was ignorance is the goal of all the spiritual teachings. Ignorance must be of one who is aware. Awareness is *jnana. Jnana* is eternal and natural, *ajnana* is unnatural and unreal.

Q: *Having heard this truth, why does not one remain content?*

A: Because *samskaras* [innate mental tendencies] have not been destroyed. Unless the *samskaras* cease to exist, there will always be doubt and confusion. All efforts are directed to destroying doubt and confusion. To do so their roots must be cut. Their roots are the *samskaras*. These are rendered ineffective by practice as prescribed by the Guru. The Guru leaves it to the seeker to do this much so that he might himself find out that there is no ignorance. Hearing the truth [*sravana*] is the first stage. If the understanding is not firm one has to practise reflection [*manana*] and uninterrupted contemplation [*nididhyasana*] on it. These two processes scorch the seeds of *samskaras* so that they are rendered ineffective.

Some extraordinary people get unshakable *jnana* after hearing the truth only once. These are the advanced seekers. Beginners take longer to gain it.

Q: *How did ignorance* [avidya] *arise at all?*

A: Ignorance never arose. It has no real being. That which is, is only *vidya* [knowledge].

Q: *Why then do I not realise it?*

A: Because of the *samskaras*. However, find out who does not realise and what he does not realise. Then it will be clear that there is no *avidya*.[16]

Q: *So, it is wrong to begin with a goal, is it?*

A: If there is a goal to be reached it cannot be permanent. The goal must already be there. We seek to reach the goal with the ego, but the goal exists before the ego. What is in the goal is even prior to our birth, that is, to the birth of the ego. Because we exist the ego appears to exist too.

If we look on the Self as the ego then we become the ego, if as the mind we become the mind, if as the body we become the body.

It is the thought which builds up sheaths in so many ways. The shadow on the water is found to be shaking. Can anyone stop the shaking of the shadow? If it would cease to shake you would not notice the water but only the light. Similarly take no notice of the ego and its activities, but see only the light behind. The ego is the thought 'I'. The true 'I' is the Self.

Q: *If it is just a question of giving up ideas then it is only one step to realisation.*

A: Realisation is already there. The state free from thoughts is the only real state. There is no such action as realisation. Is there anyone who is not realising the Self? Does anyone deny his own existence? Speaking of realisation, it implies two selves – the one to realise, the other to be realised. What is not already realised is sought to be realised. Once we admit our existence, how is it that we do not know our Self?

Q: *Because of the thoughts, the mind.*

A: Quite so. It is the mind that veils our happiness. How do we know that we exist? If you say because of the world around us, then how do you know that you existed in deep sleep?

Q: *How to get rid of the mind?*

A: Is it the mind that wants to kill itself? The mind cannot kill itself. So your business is to find the real nature of the mind. Then you will know that there is no mind. When the Self is sought, the mind is nowhere. Abiding in the Self, one need not worry about the mind.[17]

Q: *Is* mukti *the same as realisation?*

A: *Mukti* or liberation is our nature. It is another name for us. Our wanting *mukti* is a very funny thing. It is like a man who is in the shade, voluntarily leaving the shade, going into the sun, feeling the severity of the heat there, making great efforts to get back into the shade and then rejoicing, 'How sweet is the shade! I have reached the shade at last!' We are all doing exactly the same. We are not different from the reality. We imagine we are different, that is we create the *bheda bhava* [the feeling of difference] and then undergo great *sadhana* [spiritual practices] to get rid of the *bheda bhava* and realise the oneness. Why imagine or create *bheda bhava* and then destroy it?[18]

Q: *This can be realised only by the grace of the master. I was reading* Sri Bhagavata. *It says that bliss can be had only by the dust of the master's feet. I pray for grace.*

A: What is bliss but your own being? You are not apart from being which is the same as bliss. You are now thinking that you are the mind or the body which are both changing and transient. But you are unchanging and eternal. That is what you should know.

Q: *It is darkness and I am ignorant.*

A: This ignorance must go. Again, who says 'I am ignorant'? He must be the witness of ignorance. That is what you are. Socrates said, 'I know that I do not know.' Can it be ignorance? It is wisdom.

Q: *Why then do I feel unhappy when I am in Vellore and feel peace in your presence?*

A: Can the feeling in this place be bliss? When you leave this place you say you are unhappy. Therefore this peace is not permanent, it is mixed with unhappiness which is felt in another place. Therefore you cannot find bliss in places and in periods of time. It must be permanent in order that it may be useful. It is your own being which is permanent. Be the Self and that is bliss. You are always that.[19]

The Self is always realised. It is not necessary to seek to realise what is already and always realised. For you cannot deny your own existence. That existence is consciousness, the Self.

Unless you exist you cannot ask questions. So you must admit your own existence. That existence is the Self. It is already realised. Therefore the effort to realise results only in your realising your present mistake – that you have not realised your Self. There is no fresh realisation. The Self becomes revealed.

Q: *That will take some years.*

A: Why years? The idea of time is only in your mind. It is not in the Self. There is no time for the Self. Time arises as an idea after the ego arises. But you are the Self beyond time and space. You exist even in the absence of time and space.[20]

Were it true that you realise it later it means that you are not realised now. Absence of realisation in the present moment may be repeated at any moment in the future, for time is infinite. So too, such realisation is impermanent. But that is not true. It is wrong to consider realisation to be impermanent. It is the true eternal state which cannot change.

Q: *Yes, I shall understand it in course of time.*

A: You are already that. Time and space cannot affect the Self. They are in you. So also all that you see around you is in you. There is a story to illustrate this point. A lady had a precious

necklace round her neck. Once in her excitement she forgot it and thought that the necklace was lost. She became anxious and looked for it in her home but could not find it. She asked her friends and neighbours if they knew anything about the necklace. They did not. At last a kind friend of hers told her to feel the necklace round her neck. She found that it had all along been round her neck and she was happy. When others asked her later if she had found the necklace which was lost, she said, 'Yes, I have found it.' She still felt that she had recovered a lost jewel.

Now did she lose it at all? It was all along round her neck. But judge her feelings. She was as happy as if she had recovered a lost jewel. Similarly with us, we imagine that we will realise that Self some time, whereas we are never anything but the Self.[21]

Q: *There must be something that I can do to reach this state.*

A: The conception that there is a goal and a path to it is wrong. We are the goal or peace always. To get rid of the notion that we are not peace is all that is required.

Q: *All books say that the guidance of a Guru is necessary.*

A: The Guru will say only what I am saying now. He will not give you anything you have not already got. It is impossible for anyone to get what he has not got already. Even if he gets any such thing, it will go as it came. What comes will also go. What always is will alone remain. The Guru cannot give you anything new, which you don't have already. Removal of the notion that we have not realised the Self is all that is required. We are always the Self only we don't realise it.[22]

We go round and round in search of *atma* [Self] saying, 'Where is *atma*? Where is it? till at last the dawn of *jnana drishti* [vision of knowledge] is reached, and we say, 'This is *atma* this is me.' We should acquire that vision. When once that vision is reached, there will be no attachments even if one mixes with the world and moves about in it. When once you put on shoes your feet do not feel the pain of walking on any number of stones or thorns on the way. You walk about without fear or care, even if there are mountains on the way. In the same way, everything will be natural to those who have attained *jnana drishti*. What is there apart from one's own Self?

Q: *The natural state can be known only after all this worldly vision subsides. But how is it to subside?*

A: If the mind subsides, the whole world subsides. Mind is the cause of all this. If that subsides, the natural state presents itself.

The Self proclaims itself at all times as 'I, I'. It is self-luminous. It is here. All this is that. We are in that only. Being in it, why search for it? The ancients say: 'Making the vision absorbed in *jnana* one sees the world as *Brahman*.'[23]

CHAPTER 3
The jnani

Many of the Sri Ramana's visitors appeared to have an insatiable curiosity about the state of Self-realisation and they were particularly interested to know how a *jnani* experienced himself and the world around him. Some of the questions he was asked on the subject reflected the bizarre notions that many people had about this state, but most of them tended to be variations of one of the four following questions:

1 How can a *jnani* function without any individual awareness of consciousness?
2 How can he say that he 'does nothing' (a statement which Sri Ramana often made) when others see him active in the world?
3 How does he perceive the world? Does he perceive the world at all?
4 How does the *jnani*'s awareness of pure consciousness relate to the alternating states of body and mind consciousness experienced in waking, dreaming and sleeping?

The hidden premise behind all such questions is the belief that there is a person (the *jnani*) who experiences a state he calls the Self. This assumption is not true. It is merely a mental construct devised by those who have not realised the Self (*ajnanis*) to make sense of the *jnani*'s experience. Even the use of the word *jnani* is indicative of this erroneous belief since it literally means a knower of *jnana*, the reality. The *ajnani* uses this term because he imagines that the world is made up of seekers of reality and knowers of reality; the truth of the Self is that there are neither *jnanis* nor *ajnanis*, there is only *jnana*.

Sri Ramana pointed this out both directly and indirectly on many occasions, but few of his questioners were able to grasp, even conceptually, the implications of such a statement. Because of this he usually adapted his ideas in such a way that they

conformed to the prejudices of his listeners. In most of the conversations in this chapter he accepts that his questioners perceive a distinction between the *jnani* and the *ajnani*, and, without challenging the basis of that assumption, he assumes the role of the *jnani* and attempts to explain the implications of being in that state.

Q: *Then what is the difference between the* baddha *and the* mukta, *the bound man and the one liberated?*

A: The ordinary man lives in the brain unaware of himself in the Heart. The *jnana siddha* [*jnani*] lives in the Heart. When he moves about and deals with men and things, he knows that what he sees is not separate from the one supreme reality, the *Brahman* which he realised in the Heart as his own Self, the real.

Q: *What about the ordinary man?*

A: I have just said that he sees things outside himself. He is separate from the world, from his own deeper truth, from the truth that supports him and what he sees. The man who has realised the supreme truth of his own existence realises that it is the one supreme reality that is there behind him, behind the world. In fact, he is aware of the one, as the real, the Self in all selves, in all things, eternal and immutable, in all that is impermanent and mutable.[1]

Q: *What is the relation between the pure consciousness realised by the* jnani *and the 'I am'-ness which is accepted as the primary datum of experience?*

A: The undifferentiated consciousness of pure being is the Heart or *hridayam*, which is what you really are. From the Heart arises the 'I am'-ness as the primary datum of one's experience. By itself it is completely pure [*suddha-sattva*] in character. It is in this form of pristine purity [*suddha-sattva-swarupa*], uncontaminated by *rajas* and *tamas* [activity and inertia], that the 'I' appears to subsist in the *jnani*.

Q: *In the* jnani *the ego subsists in the pure form and therefore it appears as something real. Am I right?*

A: The appearance of the ego in any form, either in the *jnani* or *ajnani*, is itself an experience. But to the *ajnani* who is deluded into thinking that the waking state and the world are real, the ego also appears to be real. Since he sees the *jnani* act like other individuals, he feels constrained to posit some notion of

individuality with reference to the *jnani* also.

Q: *How then does the* aham-vritti *['I'-thought, the sense of individuality] function in the* jnani*?*

A: It does not function in him at all. The *jnani*'s real nature is the Heart itself, because he is one and identical with the undifferentiated, pure consciousness referred to by the *Upanishads* as the *prajnana* [full consciousness]. *Prajnana* is truly *Brahman*, the absolute, and there is no *Brahman* other than *prajnana*.[2]

Q: *Does a* jnani *have* sankalpas *[desires]?*

A: The main qualities of the ordinary mind are *tamas* and *rajas* [sloth and excitement]; hence it is full of egoistic desires and weaknesses. But the *jnani's* mind is *suddha-sattva* [pure harmony] and formless, functioning in the subtle *vijnanamayakosha* [the sheath of knowledge], through which he keeps contact with the world. His desires are therefore also pure.[3]

Q: *I am trying to understand the* jnani*'s point of view about the world. Is the world perceived after Self-realisation?*

A: Why worry yourself about the world and what happens to it after Self-realisation? First realise the Self. What does it matter if the world is perceived or not? Do you gain anything to help you in your quest by the non-perception of the world during sleep? Conversely, what would you lose now by the perception of the world? It is quite immaterial to the *jnani* or *ajnani* if he perceives the world or not. It is seen by both, but their view-points differ.

Q: *If the* jnani *and the* ajnani *perceive the world in like manner, where is the difference between them?*

A: Seeing the world, the *jnani* sees the Self which is the substratum of all that is seen; the *ajnani*, whether he sees the world or not, is ignorant of his true being, the Self.

Take the instance of moving pictures on the screen in the cinema-show. What is there in front of you before the play begins? Merely the screen. On that screen you see the entire show, and for all appearances the pictures are real. But go and try to take hold of them. What do you take hold of? Merely the screen on which the pictures appeared. After the play, when the pictures disappear, what remains? The screen again.

So with the Self. That alone exists, the pictures come and go. If you hold on to the Self, you will not be deceived by the appearance of the pictures. Nor does it matter at all if the pictures appear or disappear. Ignoring the Self the *ajnani* thinks the world is real, just as ignoring the screen he sees merely the pictures, as if

they existed apart from it. If one knows that without the seer there is nothing to be seen, just as there are no pictures without the screen, one is not deluded. The *jnani* knows that the screen and the pictures are only the Self. With the pictures the Self is in its manifest form; without the pictures it remains in the unmanifest form. To the *jnani* it is quite immaterial if the Self is in the one form or the other. He is always the Self. But the *ajnani* seeing the *jnani* active gets confounded.[4]

Q: *Does Bhagavan see the world as part and parcel of himself? How does he see the world?*

A: The Self alone is and nothing else. However, it is differentiated owing to ignorance. Differentiation is threefold:

(1) of the same kind;
(2) of a different kind; and
(3) as parts in itself.

The world is not another Self similar to the Self. It is not different from the Self; nor is it part of the Self.

Q: *Is not the world reflected on the Self?*

A: For reflection there must be an object and an image. But the Self does not admit of these differences.[5]

Q: *Does a* jnani *have dreams?*

A: Yes, he does dream, but he knows it to be a dream, in the same way as he knows the waking state to be a dream. You may call them dream no.1 and dream no.2. The *jnani* being established in the fourth state – *turiya*, the supreme reality – he detachedly witnesses the three other states, waking, dreaming and dreamless sleep, as pictures superimposed on it.[6]

For those who experience waking, dream and sleep, the state of wakeful sleep, which is beyond those three states, is named *turiya* [the fourth]. But since that *turiya* alone exists and since the seeming three states do not exist, know for certain that *turiya* is itself *turiyatita* [that which transcends the fourth].[7]

Q: *For the* jnani *then, there is no distinction between the three states of mind?*

A: How can there be, when the mind itself is dissolved and lost in the light of consciousness?

For the *jnani* all the three states are equally unreal. But the *ajnani* is unable to comprehend this, because for him the standard of reality is the waking state, whereas for the *jnani* the standard of reality is reality itself. This reality of pure consciousness is eternal

by its nature and therefore subsists equally during what you call waking, dreaming and sleep. To him who is one with that reality there is neither the mind nor its three states and, therefore, neither introversion nor extroversion.

His is the ever-waking state, because he is awake to the eternal Self; his is the ever-dreaming state, because to him the world is no better than a repeatedly presented dream phenomenon; his is the ever-sleeping state, because he is at all times without the 'body-am-I' consciousness.[8]

Q: *Is there no* dehatma buddhi *[I-am-the-body idea] for the* jnani*? If, for instance, Sri Bhagavan is bitten by an insect, is there no sensation?*

A: There is the sensation and there is also the *dehatma buddhi*. The latter is common to both *jnani* and *ajnani* with this difference, that the *ajnani* thinks only the body is myself, whereas the *jnani* knows all is of the Self, or all this is *Brahman*. If there be pain let it be. It is also part of the Self. The Self is *poorna* [perfect].

After transcending *dehatma buddhi* one becomes a *jnani*. In the absence of that idea there cannot be either *kartritva* [doership] or *karta* [doer]. So a *jnani* has no *karma* [that is, a *jnani* performs no actions]. That is his experience. Otherwise he is not a *jnani*. However the *ajnani* identifies the *jnani* with his body, which the *jnani* does not do.[9]

Q: *I see you doing things. How can you say that you never perform actions?*

A: The radio sings and speaks, but if you open it you will find no one inside. Similarly, my existence is like the space; though this body speaks like the radio, there is no one inside as a doer.[10]

Q: *I find this hard to understand. Could you please elaborate on this?*

A: Various illustrations are given in books to enable us to understand how the *jnani* can live and act without the mind, although living and acting require the use of the mind. The potter's wheel goes on turning round even after the potter has ceased to turn it because the pot is finished. In the same way, the electric fan goes on revolving for some minutes after we switch off the current. The *prarabdha* [predestined *karma*] which created the body will make it go through whatever activities it was meant for. But the *jnani* goes through all these activities without the notion that he is the doer of them. It is hard to understand how this is possible. The illustration generally given is that the *jnani* performs

actions in some such way as a child that is roused from sleep to eat eats but does not remember next morning that it ate. It has to be remembered that all these explanations are not for the *jnani*. He knows and has no doubts. He knows that he is not the body and he knows that he is not doing anything even though his body may be engaged in some activity. These explanations are for the onlookers who think of the *jnani* as one with a body and cannot help identifying him with his body.

Q: *It is said that the shock of realisation is so great that the body cannot survive it.*

A: There are various controversies or schools of thought as to whether a *jnani* can continue to live in his physical body after realisation. Some hold that one who dies cannot be a *jnani* because his body must vanish into air, or some such thing. They put forward all sorts of funny notions. If a man must at once leave his body when he realises the Self, I wonder how any knowledge of the Self or the state of realisation can come down to other men. And that would mean that all those who have given us the fruits of their Self-realisation in books cannot be considered *jnanis* because they went on living after realisation. And if it is held that a man cannot be considered a *jnani* so long as he performs actions in the world (and action is impossible without the mind), then not only the great sages who carried on various kinds of work after attaining *jnana* must be considered *ajnanis* but the gods also, and *Iswara* [the supreme personal God of Hinduism] himself, since he continues looking after the world. The fact is that any amount of action can be performed, and performed quite well, by the *jnani*, without his identifying himself with it in any way or ever imagining that he is the doer. Some power acts through his body and uses his body to get the work done.[11]

Q: *Is a* jnani *capable of or likely to commit sins?*

A: An *ajnani* sees someone as a *jnani* and identifies him with the body. Because he does not know the Self and mistakes his body for the Self, he extends the same mistake to the state of the *jnani*. The *jnani* is therefore considered to be the physical frame.

Again since the *ajnani*, though he is not the doer, imagines himself to be the doer and considers the actions of the body his own, he thinks the *jnani* to be similarly acting when the body is active. But the *jnani* himself knows the truth and is not confounded. The state of a *jnani* cannot be determined by the *ajnani* and therefore the question troubles only the *ajnani* and

never arises for the *jnani*. If he is a doer he must determine the nature of the actions. The Self cannot be the doer. Find out who is the doer and the Self is revealed.

Q: *So it amounts to this. To see a* jnani *is not to understand him. You see the* jnani*'s body and not his* jnana. *One must therefore be a* jnani *to know a* jnani.

A: The *jnani* sees no one as an *ajnani*. All are only *jnanis* in his sight. In the ignorant state one superimposes one's ignorance on a *jnani* and mistakes him for a doer. In the state of *jnana*, the *jnani* sees nothing separate from the Self. The Self is all shining and only pure *jnana*. So there is no *ajnana* in his sight. There is an illustration for this kind of illusion or superimposition. Two friends went to sleep side by side. One of them dreamt that both of them had gone on a long journey and that they had had strange experiences. On waking up he recapitulated them and asked his friend if it was not so. The other one simply ridiculed him saying that it was only his dream and could not affect the other.

So it is with the *ajnani* who superimposes his illusory ideas on others.[12]

Q: *You have said that the* jnani *can be and is active, and deals with men and things. I have no doubt about it now. But you say at the same time that he sees no differences; to him all is one, he is always in the consciousness. If so, how does he deal with differences, with men, with things which are surely different?*

A: He sees these differences as but appearances, he sees them as not separate from the true, the real, with which he is one.

Q: *The* jnani *seems to be more accurate in his expressions, he appreciates the differences better than the ordinary man. If sugar is sweet and wormwood is bitter to me, he too seems to realise it so. In fact, all forms, all sounds, all tastes, etc., are the same to him as they are to others. If so, how can it be said that these are mere appearances? Do they not form part of his life-experience?*

A: I have said that equality is the true sign of *jnana*. The very term equality implies the existence of differences. It is a unity that the *jnani* perceives in all differences, which I call equality. Equality does not mean ignorance of distinctions. When you have the realisation you can see that these differences are very superficial, that they are not at all substantial or permanent, and what is essential in all these appearances is the one truth, the real. That I call unity. You referred to sound, taste, form, smell, etc. True the *jnani* appreciates the distinctions, but he always perceives and

experiences the one reality in all of them. That is why he has no preferences. Whether he moves about, or talks, or acts, it is all the one reality in which he acts or moves or talks. He has nothing apart from the one supreme truth.[13]

Q: *They say that the* jnani *conducts himself with absolute equality towards all?*

A: Yes.

> Friendship, kindness, happiness and such other *bhavas* [attitudes] become natural to them. Affection towards the good, kindness towards the helpless, happiness in doing good deeds, forgiveness towards the wicked, all such things are natural characteristics of the *jnani* (Patanjali, *Yoga Sutras*, 1:37).[14]

You ask about *jnanis*: they are the same in any state or condition, as they know the reality, the truth. In their daily routine of taking food, moving about and all the rest, they, the *jnanis*, act only for others. Not a single action is done for themselves. I have already told you many times that just as there are people whose profession is to mourn for a fee, so also the *jnanis* do things for the sake of others with detachment, without themselves being affected by them.

The *jnani* weeps with the weeping, laughs with the laughing, plays with the playful, sings with those who sing, keeping time to the song. What does he lose? His presence is like a pure, transparent mirror. It reflects the image exactly as it is. But the *jnani*, who is only a mirror, is unaffected by actions. How can a mirror, or the stand on which it is mounted, be affected by the reflections? Nothing affects them as they are mere supports. On the other hand, the actors in the world – the doers of all acts, the *ajnanis* – must decide for themselves what song and what action is for the welfare of the world, what is in accordance with the *sastras*, and what is practicable.[15]

Q: *There are said to be* sadeha mukta *[liberated while still in the body] and* videha mukta *[liberated at the time of death].*

A: There is no liberation, and where are *muktas*?

Q: *Do not Hindu* sastras *speak of* mukti?

A: *Mukti* is synonymous with the Self. *Jivan mukti* [liberated while still in the body] and *videha mukti* are all for the ignorant. The *jnani* is not conscious of *mukti* or *bandha* [bondage]. Bondage, liberation and orders of *mukti* are all said for an *ajnani*

in order that ignorance might be shaken off. There is only *mukti* and nothing else.

Q: *It is all right from the standpoint of Bhagavan. But what about us?*

A: The difference 'he' and 'I' are the obstacles to *jnana*.[16]

Q: *You once said: 'The liberated man is free indeed to act as he pleases, and when he leaves the mortal coil, he attains absolution, but returns not to this birth which is actually death.'*

This statement gives the impression that although the jnani *takes no birth again on this plane, he may continue to work on subtler planes, if he so chooses. Is there any desire left in him to choose?*

A: No, that was not my intention.

Q: *Further, an Indian philosopher, in one of his books, interpreting Sankara, says that there is no such thing as* videha mukti, *for after his death, the* mukta *takes a body of light in which he remains till the whole of humanity becomes liberated.*

A: That cannot be Sankara's view. In verse 566 of *Vivekachudamani* he says that after the dissolution of the physical sheath the liberated man becomes like 'water poured into water and oil into oil'. It is a state in which there is neither bondage nor liberation. Taking another body means throwing a veil, however subtle, upon reality, which is bondage. Liberation is absolute and irrevocable.[17]

Q: *How can we say the* jnani *is not in two planes? He moves about with us in the world and sees the various objects we see. It is not as if he does not see them. For instance he walks along. He sees the path he is treading. Suppose there is a chair or table placed across that path; he sees it, avoids it and goes round. So, have we not to admit he sees the world and the objects there, while of course he sees the Self?*

A: You say the *jnani* sees the path, treads it, comes across obstacles, avoids them, etc. In whose eye-sight is all this, in the *jnani*'s or yours? He sees only the Self and all in the Self.

Q: *Are there not illustrations given in our books to explain this* sahaja *[natural] state clearly to us?*

A: There are. For instance you see a reflection in the mirror and the mirror. You know the mirror to be the reality and the picture in it a mere reflection. Is it necessary that to see the mirror we should cease to see the reflection in it?[18]

Q: *What are the fundamental tests for discovering men of great spirituality, since some are reported to behave like insane people?*

A: The *jnani*'s mind is known only to the *jnani*. One must be a *jnani* oneself in order to understand another *jnani*. However the peace of mind which permeates the saint's atmosphere is the only means by which the seeker understands the greatness of the saint.

His words or actions or appearance are no indication of his greatness, for they are ordinarily beyond the comprehension of common people.[19]

Q: *Why is it said in scriptures that the sage is like a child?*

A: A child and a *jnani* are similar in a way. Incidents interest a child only so long as they last. It ceases to think of them after they have passed away. So then, it is apparent that they do not leave any impression on the child and it is not affected by them mentally. So it is with a *jnani*.[20]

Q: *You are Bhagavan. So you should know when I shall get* jnana. *Tell me when I shall be a* jnani.

A: If I am Bhagavan there is no one besides the Self – therefore no *jnani* or *ajnani*. If otherwise, I am as good as you are and know as much as yourself. Either way I cannot answer your question.[21]

Coming here, some people do not ask about themselves. They ask: 'Does the *jivan mukta* see the world? Is he affected by *karma*? What is liberation after being disembodied? Is one liberated only after being disembodied or even while alive in the body? Should the body of the sage resolve itself in light or disappear from view in any other manner? Can he be liberated though the body is left behind as a corpse?'

Their questions are endless. Why worry oneself in so many ways? Does liberation consist in knowing these things?

Therefore I say to them, 'Leave liberation alone. Is there bondage? Know this. See yourself first and foremost.'[22]

PART TWO

Enquiry and surrender

'I exist' is the only permanent self-evident experience of everyone. Nothing else is so self-evident as 'I am'. What people call self-evident, that is, the experience they get through the senses, is far from self-evident. The Self alone is that. So to do self-enquiry and be that 'I am' is the only thing to do. 'I am' is reality. I am this or that is unreal. 'I am' is truth, another name for Self.[1]

Devotion is nothing more than knowing oneself.[2]

On scrutiny, supreme devotion and *jnana* are in nature one and the same. To say that one of these two is a means to the other is due to not knowing the nature of either of them. Know that the path of *jnana* and the path of devotion are interrelated. Follow these inseparable two paths without dividing one from the other.[3]

CHAPTER 4
Self-enquiry – theory

It will be remembered that in the chapter on Self-awareness and Self-ignorance Sri Ramana maintained that Self-realisation could be brought about merely by giving up the idea that there is an individual self which functions through the body and the mind. A few of his advanced devotees were able to do this quickly and easily, but the others found it virtually impossible to discard the ingrained habits of a lifetime without undertaking some form of spiritual practice. Sri Ramana sympathised with their predicament and whenever he was asked to prescribe a spiritual practice which would facilitate Self-awareness he would recommend a technique he called self-enquiry. This practice was the cornerstone of his practical philosophy and the next three chapters will be devoted to a detailed presentation of all its aspects.

Before embarking on a description of the technique itself it will be necessary to explain Sri Ramana's views on the nature of the mind since the aim of self-enquiry is to discover, by direct experience, that the mind is non-existent. According to Sri Ramana, every conscious activity of the mind or body revolves around the tacit assumption that there is an 'I' who is doing something. The common factor in 'I think', 'I remember', 'I am acting' is the 'I' who assumes that it is responsible for all these activities. Sri Ramana called this common factor the 'I'-thought (*aham-vritti*). Literally *aham-vritti* means 'mental modification of I'. The Self or real 'I' never imagines that it is doing or thinking anything; the 'I' that imagines all this is a mental fiction and so it is called a mental modification of the Self. Since this is a rather cumbersome translation of *aham-vritti* it is usually translated as 'I'-thought.

Sri Ramana upheld the view that the notion of individuality is only the 'I'-thought manifesting itself in different ways. Instead of regarding the different activities of the mind (such as ego, intellect and memory) as separate functions he preferred to view them all as different forms of the 'I'-thought. Since he equated individuality

with the mind and the mind with the 'I'-thought it follows that the disappearance of the sense of individuality (i.e. Self-realisation) implies the disappearance of both the mind and the 'I'-thought. This is confirmed by his frequent statements to the effect that after Self-realisation there is no thinker of thoughts, no performer of actions and no awareness of individual existence.

Since he upheld the notion that the Self is the only existing reality he regarded the 'I'-thought as a mistaken assumption which has no real existence of its own. He explained its appearance by saying that it can only appear to exist by identifying with an object. When thoughts arise the 'I'-thought claims ownership of them – 'I think', 'I believe', 'I want', 'I am acting' – but there is no separate 'I'-thought that exists independently of the objects that it is identifying with. It only appears to exist as a real continuous entity because of the incessant flow of identifications which are continually taking place. Almost all of these identifications can be traced back to an initial assumption that the 'I' is limited to the body, either as an owner-occupant or co-extensive with its physical form. This 'I am the body' idea is the primary source of all subsequent wrong identifications and its dissolution is the principal aim of self-enquiry.

Sri Ramana maintained that this tendency towards self-limiting identifications could be checked by trying to separate the subject 'I' from the objects of thought which it identified with. Since the individual 'I'-thought cannot exist without an object, if attention is focused on the subjective feeling of 'I' or 'I am' with such intensity that the thoughts 'I am this' or 'I am that' do not arise, then the individual 'I' will be unable to connect with objects. If this awareness of 'I' is sustained, the individual 'I' (the 'I'-thought) will disappear and in its place there will be a direct experience of the Self. This constant attention to the inner awareness of 'I' or 'I am' was called self-enquiry (*vichara*) by Sri Ramana and he constantly recommended it as the most efficient and direct way of discovering the unreality of the 'I'-thought.

In Sri Ramana's terminology the 'I'-thought rises from the Self or the Heart and subsides back into the Self when its tendency to identify itself with thought objects ceases. Because of this he often tailored his advice to conform to this image of a rising and subsiding 'I'. He might say 'trace the "I"-thought back to its source', or 'find out where the "I" rises from', but the implication was always the same. Whatever the language used he was advising

his devotees to maintain awareness of the 'I'-thought until it dissolved in the source from which it came.

He sometimes mentioned that thinking or repeating 'I' mentally would also lead one in the right direction but it is important to note that this is only a preliminary stage of the practice. The repetition of 'I' still involves a subject (the 'I'-thought) having a perception of an object (the thoughts 'I, I') and while such duality exists the 'I'-thought will continue to thrive. It only finally disappears when the perception of all objects, both physical and mental, ceases. This is not brought about by being aware *of* an 'I', but only by *being* the 'I'. This stage of experiencing the subject rather than being aware of an object is the culminating phase of self-enquiry and it will be explained in greater detail in the following chapter.

This important distinction is the key element which distinguishes self-enquiry from nearly all other spiritual practices and it explains why Sri Ramana consistently maintained that most other practices were ineffective. He often pointed out that traditional meditations and yoga practices necessitate the existence of a subject who meditates on an object and he would usually add that such a relationship sustained the 'I'-thought instead of eliminating it. In his view such practices may effectively quieten the mind, and they may even produce blissful experiences, but they will never culminate in Self-realisation because the 'I'-thought is not being isolated and deprived of its identity.

The conversations which comprise this chapter mostly deal with Sri Ramana's views on the theoretical background of self-enquiry. The practical aspects of the technique will be explained in greater detail in chapter 5.

Q: *What is the nature of the mind?*

A: The mind is nothing other than the 'I'-thought. The mind and the ego are one and the same. The other mental faculties such as the intellect and the memory are only this. Mind [*manas*], intellect [*buddhi*], the storehouse of mental tendencies [*chittam*], and ego [*ahamkara*]; all these are only the one mind itself. This is like different names being given to a man according to his different functions. The individual soul [*jiva*] is nothing but this soul or ego.[1]

Q: *How shall we discover the nature of the mind, that is, its*

ultimate cause, or the noumenon of which it is a manifestation?

A: Arranging thoughts in the order of value, the 'I'-thought is the all-important thought. Personality-idea or thought is also the root or the stem of all other thoughts, since each idea or thought arises only as someone's thought and is not known to exist independently of the ego. The ego therefore exhibits thought-activity. The second and the third persons [he, you, that, etc.] do not appear except to the first person [I]. Therefore they arise only after the first person appears, so all the three persons seem to rise and sink together. Trace, then, the ultimate cause of 'I' or personality.[2]

From where does this 'I' arise? Seek for it within; it then vanishes. This is the pursuit of wisdom. When the mind unceasingly investigates its own nature, it transpires that there is no such thing as mind. This is the direct path for all. The mind is merely thoughts. Of all thoughts the thought 'I' is the root. Therefore the mind is only the thought 'I'.[3]

The birth of the 'I'-thought is one's own birth, its death is the person's death. After the 'I'-thought has arisen, the wrong identity with the body arises. Get rid of the 'I'-thought. So long as 'I' is alive there is grief. When 'I' ceases to exist there is no grief.

Q: *Yes, but when I take to the 'I'-thought, other thoughts arise and disturb me.*

A: See whose thoughts they are. They will vanish. They have their root in the single 'I'-thought. Hold it and they will disappear.[4]

Q: *How can any enquiry initiated by the ego reveal its own unreality?*

A: The ego's phenomenal existence is transcended when you dive into the source from where the 'I'-thought rises.

Q: *But is not the* aham-vritti *only one of the three forms in which the ego manifests itself.* Yoga Vasishtha *and other ancient texts describe the ego as having a threefold form.*

A: It is so. The ego is described as having three bodies, the gross, the subtle and the causal, but that is only for the purpose of analytical exposition. If the method of enquiry were to depend on the ego's form, you may take it that any enquiry would become altogether impossible, because the forms the ego may assume are legion. Therefore, for the purposes of self-enquiry you have to proceed on the basis that the ego has but one form, namely that of *aham-vritti.*

Q: *But it may prove inadequate for realising* jnana.

A: Self-enquiry by following the clue of *aham-vritti* is just like the dog tracing his master by his scent. The master may be at some distant unknown place, but that does not stand in the way of the dog tracing him. The master's scent is an infallible clue for the animal, and nothing else, such as the dress he wears, or his build and stature, etc., counts. To that scent the dog holds on undistractedly while searching for him, and finally it succeeds in tracing him.

Q: *The question still remains why the quest for the source of* aham-vritti, *as distinguished from other* vrittis *[modifications of the mind], should be considered the direct means to Self-realisation.*

A: Although the concept of 'I'-ness or 'I am'-ness is by usage known as *aham-vritti* it is not really a *vritti* [modification] like other *vrittis* of the mind. Because unlike the other *vrittis* which have no essential interrelation, the *aham-vritti* is equally and essentially related to each and every *vritti* of the mind. Without the *aham-vritti* there can be no other *vritti*, but the *aham-vritti* can subsist by itself without depending on any other *vritti* of the mind. The *aham-vritti* is therefore fundamentally different from other *vrittis.*

So then, the search for the source of the *aham-vritti* is not merely the search for the basis of one of the forms of the ego but for the very source itself from which arises the 'I am'-ness. In other words, the quest for and the realisation of the source of the ego in the form of *aham-vritti* necessarily implies the transcendence of the ego in every one of its possible forms.

Q: *Conceding that the* aham-vritti *essentially comprises all the forms of the ego, why should that* vritti *alone be chosen as the means for self-enquiry?*

A: Because it is the one irreducible datum of your experience and because seeking its source is the only practicable course you can adopt to realise the Self. The ego is said to have a causal body [the state of the 'I' during sleep], but how can you make it the subject of your investigation? When the ego adopts that form, you are immersed in the darkness of sleep.

Q: *But is not the ego in its subtle and causal forms too intangible to be tackled through the enquiry into the source of* aham-vritti *conducted while the mind is awake?*

A: No. The enquiry into the source of *aham-vritti* touches the

very existence of the ego. Therefore the subtlety of the ego's form is not a material consideration.

Q: *While the one aim is to realise the unconditioned, pure being of the Self, which is in no way dependent on the ego, how can enquiry pertaining to the ego in the form of* aham-vritti *be of any use?*

A: From the functional point of view the ego has one and only one characteristic. The ego functions as the knot between the Self which is pure consciousness and the physical body which is inert and insentient. The ego is therefore called the *chit-jada-granthi* [the knot between consciousness and the inert body]. In your investigation into the source of *aham-vritti*, you take the essential *chit* [consciousness] aspect of the ego. For this reason the enquiry must lead to the realisation of pure consciousness of the Self.[5]

You must distinguish between the 'I', pure in itself, and the 'I'-thought. The latter, being merely a thought, sees subject and object, sleeps, wakes up, eats and thinks, dies and is reborn. But the pure 'I' is the pure being, eternal existence, free from ignorance and thought-illusion. If you stay as the 'I', your being alone, without thought, the 'I'-thought will disappear and the delusion will vanish for ever. In a cinema-show you can see pictures only in a very dim light or in darkness. But when all the lights are switched on, the pictures disappear. So also in the floodlight of the supreme *atman* all objects disappear.

Q: *That is the transcendental state.*

A: No. Transcending what, and by whom? You alone exist.[6]

Q: *It is said that the Self is beyond the mind and yet the realisation is with the mind. 'The mind cannot think it. It cannot be thought of by the mind and the mind alone can realise it.' How are these contradictions to be reconciled?*

A: *Atman* is realised with *mruta manas* [dead mind], that is, mind devoid of thoughts and turned inward. Then the mind sees its own source and becomes that [the Self]. It is not as the subject perceiving an object.

When the room is dark a lamp is necessary to illumine and eyes to cognise objects. But when the sun has risen there is no need of a lamp to see objects. To see the sun no lamp is necessary, it is enough that you turn your eyes towards the self-luminous sun.

Similarly with the mind. To see objects the reflected light of the mind is necessary. To see the Heart it is enough that the mind is turned towards it. Then mind loses itself and Heart shines forth.[7]

The essence of mind is only awareness or consciousness. When the ego, however, dominates it, it functions as the reasoning, thinking or sensing faculty. The cosmic mind, being not limited by the ego, has nothing separate from itself and is therefore only aware. This is what the Bible means by 'I am that I am'.[8]

When the mind perishes in the supreme consciousness of one's own Self, know that all the various powers beginning with the power of liking [and including the power of doing and the power of knowing] will entirely disappear, being found to be an unreal imagination appearing in one's own form of consciousness. The impure mind which functions as thinking and forgetting, alone is *samsara*, which is the cycle of birth and death. The real 'I' in which the activity of thinking and forgetting has perished, alone is the pure liberation. It is devoid of *pramada* [forgetfulness of Self] which is the cause of birth and death.[9]

Q: *How is the ego to be destroyed?*

A: Hold the ego first and then ask how it is to be destroyed. Who asks the question? It is the ego. This question is a sure way to cherish the ego and not to kill it. If you seek the ego you will find that it does not exist. That is the way to destroy it.[10]

Q: *How is realisation made possible?*

A: There is an absolute Self from which a spark proceeds as from a fire. The spark is called the ego. In the case of an ignorant man it identifies itself with an object simultaneously with its rise. It cannot remain independent of such association with objects. The association is *ajnana* or ignorance and its destruction is the object of our efforts. If its objectifying tendency is killed it remains pure, and also merges into the source. The wrong identification with the body is *dehatma buddhi* ['I am the body' idea]. This must go before good results follow.

The 'I' in its purity is experienced in intervals between the two states or two thoughts. Ego is like that caterpillar which leaves its hold only after catching another. Its true nature can be found when it is out of contact with objects or thoughts.[11]

This ghostly ego which is devoid of form comes into existence by grasping a form; grasping a form it endures; feeding upon forms which it grasps it waxes more; leaving one form it grasps another form, but when sought for it takes to flight.

Only if that first person, the ego, in the form 'I am the body', exists will the second and third persons [you, he, they, etc.] exist. If by one's scrutinising the truth of the first person the first person

is destroyed, the second and third persons will cease to exist and one's own nature which will then shine as one will truly be the state of Self.[12]

The thought 'I am this body of flesh and blood' is the one thread on which are strung the various other thoughts. Therefore, if we turn inwards enquiring 'Where is this I?' all thoughts (including the 'I'-thought) will come to an end and Self-knowledge will then spontaneously shine forth.[13]

Q: *When I read Sri Bhagavan's works I find that investigation is said to be the one method for realisation.*

A: Yes, that is *vichara* [self-enquiry].

Q: *How is that to be done?*

A: The questioner must admit the existence of his Self. 'I am' is the realisation. To pursue the clue till realisation is *vichara. Vichara* and realisation are the same.

Q: *It is elusive. What shall I meditate upon?*

A: Meditation requires an object to meditate upon, whereas there is only the subject without the object in *vichara.* Meditation differs from *vichara* in this way.

Q: *Is not* dhyana *[meditation] one of the efficient processes for realisation?*

A: *Dhyana* is concentration on an object. It fulfils the purpose of keeping away diverse thoughts and fixing the mind on a single thought, which must also disappear before realisation. But realisation is nothing new to be acquired. It is already there, but obstructed by a screen of thoughts. All our attempts are directed to lifting this screen and then realisation is revealed.

If seekers are advised to meditate, many may go away satisfied with the advice. But someone among them may turn round and ask, 'Who am I to meditate on an object?' Such a one must be told to find the Self. That is the finality. That is *vichara.*

Q: *Will* vichara *alone do in the absence of meditation?*

A: *Vichara* is the process and the goal also. 'I am' is the goal and the final reality. To hold to it with effort is *vichara.* When spontaneous and natural it is realisation.[14] If one leaves aside *vichara,* the most efficacious *sadhana,* there are no other adequate means whatsoever to make the mind subside. If made to subside by other means, it will remain as if subsided but will rise again.[15] Self-enquiry is the one infallible means, the only direct one, to realise the unconditioned, absolute being that you really are.

Q: *Why should self-enquiry alone be considered the direct means to* jnana*?*

A: Because every kind of *sadhana* except that of *atma-vichara* [self-enquiry] presupposes the retention of the mind as the instrument for carrying on the *sadhana,* and without the mind it cannot be practised. The ego may take different and subtler forms at the different stages of one's practice, but is itself never destroyed.

When Janaka exclaimed, 'Now I have discovered the thief who has been ruining me all along. He shall be dealt with summarily', the king was really referring to the ego or the mind.

Q: *But the thief may well be apprehended by the other* sadhanas *as well.*

A: The attempt to destroy the ego or the mind through *sadhanas* other than *atma-vichara* is just like the thief pretending to be a policeman to catch the thief, that is, himself. *Atma-vichara* alone can reveal the truth that neither the ego nor the mind really exists, and enable one to realise the pure, undifferentiated being of the Self or the absolute.

Having realised the Self, nothing remains to be known, because it is perfect bliss, it is the all.[16]

Q: *Why is self-enquiry more direct than other methods?*

A: Attention to one's own Self, which is ever shining as 'I', the one undivided and pure reality, is the only raft with which the individual, who is deluded by thinking 'I am the body', can cross the ocean of unending births.[17]

Reality is simply the loss of ego. Destroy the ego by seeking its identity. Because the ego is no entity it will automatically vanish and reality will shine forth by itself. This is the direct method, whereas all other methods are done only by retaining the ego. In those paths there arise so many doubts and the eternal question 'Who am I?' remains to be tackled finally. But in this method the final question is the only one and it is raised from the beginning. No *sadhanas* are necessary for engaging in this quest.

There is no greater mystery than this – that being the reality we seek to gain reality. We think that there is something hiding our reality and that it must be destroyed before the reality is gained. It is ridiculous. A day will dawn when you will yourself laugh at your past efforts. That which will be on the day you laugh is also here and now.[18]

CHAPTER 5
Self-enquiry – practice

Beginners in self-enquiry were advised by Sri Ramana to put their attention on the inner feeling of 'I' and to hold that feeling as long as possible. They would be told that if their attention was distracted by other thoughts they should revert to awareness of the 'I'-thought whenever they became aware that their attention had wandered. He suggested various aids to assist this process – one could ask oneself 'Who am I?' or 'Where does this I come from?' – but the ultimate aim was to be continuously aware of the 'I' which assumes that it is responsible for all the activities of the body and the mind.

In the early stages of practice attention to the feeling 'I' is a mental activity which takes the form of a thought or a perception. As the practice develops the thought 'I' gives way to a subjectively experienced feeling of 'I', and when this feeling ceases to connect and identify with thoughts and objects it completely vanishes. What remains is an experience of being in which the sense of individuality has temporarily ceased to operate. The experience may be intermittent at first but with repeated practice it becomes easier and easier to reach and maintain. When self-enquiry reaches this level there is an effortless awareness of being in which individual effort is no longer possible since the 'I' who makes the effort has temporarily ceased to exist. It is not Self-realisation since the 'I'-thought periodically reasserts itself but it is the highest level of practice. Repeated experience of this state of being weakens and destroys the *vasanas* (mental tendencies) which cause the 'I'-thought to rise, and, when their hold has been sufficiently weakened, the power of the Self destroys the residual tendencies so completely that the 'I'-thought never rises again. This is the final and irreversible state of Self-realisation.

This practice of self-attention or awareness of the 'I'-thought is a gentle technique which bypasses the usual repressive methods of controlling the mind. It is not an exercise in concentration, nor does it aim at suppressing thoughts; it merely invokes awareness

of the source from which the mind springs. The method and goal of self-enquiry is to abide in the source of the mind and to be aware of what one really is by withdrawing attention and interest from what one is not. In the early stages effort in the form of transferring attention from the thoughts to the thinker is essential, but once awareness of the 'I'-feeling has been firmly established, further effort is counter-productive. From then on it is more a process of being than doing, of effortless being rather than an effort to be.

Being what one already is is effortless since beingness is always present and always experienced. On the other hand, pretending to be what one is not (i.e. the body and the mind) requires continuous mental effort, even though the effort is nearly always at a subconscious level. It therefore follows that in the higher stages of self-enquiry effort takes attention away from the experience of being while the cessation of mental effort reveals it. Ultimately, the Self is not discovered as a result of doing anything, but only by being. As Sri Ramana himself once remarked:

> 'Do not meditate – be!
> Do not think that you are – be!
> Don't think about being – you are!'[1]

Self-enquiry should not be regarded as a meditation practice that takes place at certain hours and in certain positions; it should continue throughout one's waking hours, irrespective of what one is doing. Sri Ramana saw no conflict between working and self-enquiry and he maintained that with a little practice it could be done under any circumstances. He did sometimes say that regular periods of formal practice were good for beginners, but he never advocated long periods of sitting meditation and he always showed his disapproval when any of his devotees expressed a desire to give up their mundane activities in favour of a meditative life.

Q: *You say one can realise the Self by a search for it. What is the character of this search?*

A: You are the mind or think that you are the mind. The mind is nothing but thoughts. Now behind every particular thought there is a general thought which is the 'I', that is yourself. Let us call this 'I' the first thought. Stick to this 'I'-thought and question

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it to find out what it is. When this question takes strong hold on you, you cannot think of other thoughts.

Q: *When I do this and cling to my self, that is, the 'I'-thought, other thoughts come and go, but I say to myself 'Who am I?' and there is no answer forthcoming. To be in this condition is the practice. Is it so?*

A: This is a mistake that people often make. What happens when you make a serious quest for the Self is that the 'I'-thought disappears and something else from the depths takes hold of you and that is not the 'I' which commenced the quest.

Q: *What is this something else?*

A: That is the real Self, the import of 'I'. It is not the ego. It is the supreme being itself.

Q: *But you have often said that one must reject other thoughts when one begins the quest but the thoughts are endless. If one thought is rejected, another comes and there seems to be no end at all.*

A: I do not say that you must go on rejecting thoughts. Cling to yourself, that is, to the 'I'-thought. When your interest keeps you to that single idea, other thoughts will automatically get rejected and they will vanish.

Q: *And so rejection of thoughts is not necessary?*

A: No. It may be necessary for a time or for some. You fancy that there is no end if one goes on rejecting every thought when it rises. It is not true, there is an end. If you are vigilant and make a stern effort to reject every thought when it rises you will soon find that you are going deeper and deeper into your own inner self. At that level it is not necessary to make an effort to reject thoughts.

Q: *Then it is possible to be without effort, without strain.*

A: Not only that, it is impossible for you to make an effort beyond a certain extent.

Q: *I want to be further enlightened. Should I try to make no effort at all?*

A: Here it is impossible for you to be without effort. When you go deeper, it is impossible for you to make any effort.[2]

If the mind becomes introverted through enquiry into the source of *aham-vritti*, the *vasanas* become extinct. The light of the Self falls on the *vasanas* and produces the phenomenon of reflection we call the mind. Thus, when the *vasanas* become extinct the mind also disappears, being absorbed into the light of the one reality, the Heart.

This is the sum and substance of all that an aspirant needs to know. What is imperatively required of him is an earnest and one-pointed enquiry into the source of the *aham-vritti*.[3]

Q: *How should a beginner start this practice?*

A: The mind will subside only by means of the enquiry 'Who am I?' The thought 'Who am I?', destroying all other thoughts, will itself finally be destroyed like the stick used for stirring the funeral pyre. If other thoughts rise one should, without attempting to complete them, enquire 'To whom did they rise?' What does it matter however many thoughts rise? At the very moment that each thought rises, if one vigilantly enquires 'To whom did this rise?', it will be known 'To me'. If one then enquires 'Who am I?', the mind will turn back to its source [the Self] and the thought which had risen will also subside. By repeatedly practising thus, the power of the mind to abide in its source increases.

Although tendencies towards sense-objects [*vishaya vasanas*], which have been recurring down the ages, rise in countless numbers like the waves of the ocean, they will all perish as meditation on one's nature becomes more and more intense. Without giving room even to the doubting thought, 'Is it possible to destroy all these tendencies [*vasanas*] and to remain as Self alone?', one should persistently cling fast to self-attention.

As long as there are tendencies towards sense-objects in the mind, the enquiry 'Who am I?' is necessary. As and when thoughts rise, one should annihilate all of them through enquiry then and there in their very place of origin. Not attending to what-is-other [*anya*] is non-attachment [*vairagya*] or desirelessness [*nirasa*]. Not leaving Self is knowledge [*jnana*]. In truth, these two [desirelessness and knowledge] are one and the same. Just as a pearl-diver, tying a stone to his waist, dives into the sea and takes the pearl lying at the bottom, so everyone, diving deep within himself with non-attachment, can attain the pearl of Self. If one resorts uninterruptedly to remembrance of one's real nature [*swarupa-smarana*] until one attains Self, that alone will be sufficient.

Enquiring 'Who am I that is in bondage?' and knowing one's real nature [*swarupa*] alone is liberation. Always keeping the mind fixed in Self alone is called 'self-enquiry', whereas meditation [*dhyana*] is thinking oneself to be the absolute [*Brahman*], which is existence-consciousness-bliss [*sat-chit-ananda*].[4]

Q: *The yogis say that one must renounce this world and go off into secluded jungles if one wishes to find the truth.*

A: The life of action need not be renounced. If you meditate for an hour or two every day you can then carry on with your duties. If you meditate in the right manner then the current of mind induced will continue to flow even in the midst of your work. It is as though there were two ways of expressing the same idea; the same line which you take in meditation will be expressed in your activities.

Q: *What will be the result of doing that?*

A: As you go on you will find that your attitude towards people, events and objects gradually changes. Your actions will tend to follow your meditations of their own accord.

Q: *Then you do not agree with the yogis?*

A: A man should surrender the personal selfishness which binds him to this world. Giving up the false self is the true renunciation.

Q: *How is it possible to become selfless while leading a life of worldly activity?*

A: There is no conflict between work and wisdom.

Q: *Do you mean that one can continue all the old activities in one's profession, for instance, and at the same time get enlightenment?*

A: Why not? But in that case one will not think that it is the old personality which is doing the work, because one's consciousness will gradually become transferred until it is centred in that which is beyond the little self.

Q: *If a person is engaged in work, there will be little time left for him to meditate.*

A: Setting apart time for meditation is only for the merest spiritual novices. A man who is advancing will begin to enjoy the deeper beatitude whether he is at work or not. While his hands are in society, he keeps his head cool in solitude.

Q: *Then you do not teach the way of yoga?*

A: The yogi tries to drive his mind to the goal, as a cowherd drives a bull with a stick, but on this path the seeker coaxes the bull by holding out a handful of grass.

Q: *How is that done?*

A: You have to ask yourself the question 'Who am I?' This investigation will lead in the end to the discovery of something within you which is behind the mind. Solve that great problem and you will solve all other problems.[5]

Q: *Seeking the 'I' there is nothing to be seen.*

A: Because you are accustomed to identify yourself with the body and sight with the eyes, therefore you say you do not see anything. What is there to be seen? Who is to see? How to see? There is only one consciousness which, manifesting as 'I'-thought, identifies itself with the body, projects itself through the eyes and sees the objects around. The individual is limited in the waking state and expects to see something different. The evidence of his senses will be the seal of authority. But he will not admit that the seer, the seen and the seeing are all manifestations of the same consciousness – namely, 'I, I'. Contemplation helps one to overcome the illusion that the Self must be visual. In truth, there is nothing visual. How do you feel the 'I' now? Do you hold a mirror before you to know your own being? The awareness is the 'I'. Realise it and that is the truth.

Q: *On enquiry into the origin of thoughts there is a perception of 'I'. But it does not satisfy me.*

A: Quite right. The perception of 'I' is associated with a form, maybe the body. There should be nothing associated with the pure Self. The Self is the unassociated, pure reality, in whose light the body and the ego shine. On stilling all thoughts the pure consciousness remains.

Just on waking from sleep and before becoming aware of the world there is that pure 'I, I'. Hold on to it without sleeping or without allowing thoughts to possess you. If that is held firm it does not matter even if the world is seen. The seer remains unaffected by the phenomena.[6]

What is the ego? Enquire. The body is insentient and cannot say 'I'. The Self is pure consciousness and non-dual. It cannot say 'I'. No one says 'I' in sleep. What is the ego then? It is something intermediate between the inert body and the Self. It has no *locus standi*. If sought for it vanishes like a ghost. At night a man may imagine that there is a ghost by his side because of the play of shadows. If he looks closely he discovers that the ghost is not really there, and what he imagined to be a ghost was merely a tree or a post. If he does not look closely the ghost may terrify him. All that is required is to look closely and the ghost vanishes. The ghost was never there. So also with the ego. It is an intangible link between the body and pure consciousness. It is not real. So long as one does not look closely at it, it continues to give trouble. But when one looks for it, it is found not to exist.

There is another story which illustrates this. In Hindu marriage

functions the feasts often continue for five or six days. On one of these occasions a stranger was mistaken for the best man by the bride's party and they therefore treated him with special regard. Seeing him treated with special regard by the bride's party, the bridegroom's party considered him to be some man of importance related to the bride's party and therefore they too showed him special respect. The stranger had altogether a happy time of it. He was also all along aware of the real situation. On one occasion the groom's party wanted to refer to him on some point and so they asked the bride's party about him. Immediately he scented trouble and made himself scarce. So it is with the ego. If looked for, it disappears. If not, it continues to give trouble.[7]

Q: *If I try to make the 'Who am I?' enquiry, I fall into sleep. What should I do?*

A: Persist in the enquiry throughout your waking hours. That would be quite enough. If you keep on making the enquiry till you fall asleep, the enquiry will go on during sleep also. Take up the enquiry again as soon as you wake up.[8]

Q: *How can I get peace? I do not seem to obtain it through* vichara.

A: Peace is your natural state. It is the mind that obstructs the natural state. If you do not experience peace it means that your *vichara* has been made only in the mind. Investigate what the mind is, and it will disappear. There is no such thing as mind apart from thought. Nevertheless, because of the emergence of thought, you surmise something from which it starts and term that the mind. When you probe to see what it is, you find there is really no such thing as mind. When the mind has thus vanished, you realise eternal peace.[9]

Q: *When I am engaged in enquiry as to the source from which the 'I' springs, I arrive at a stage of stillness of mind beyond which I find myself unable to proceed further. I have no thought of any kind and there is an emptiness, a blankness. A mild light pervades and I feel that it is myself bodiless. I have neither cognition nor vision of body and form. The experience lasts nearly half an hour and is pleasing. Would I be correct in concluding that all that was necessary to secure eternal happiness, that is freedom or salvation or whatever one calls it, was to continue the practice till this experience could be maintained for hours, days and months together?*

A: This does not mean salvation. Such a condition is termed

manolaya or temporary stillness of thought. *Manolaya* means concentration, temporarily arresting the movement of thoughts. As soon as this concentration ceases, thoughts, old and new, rush in as usual; and even if this temporary lulling of mind should last a thousand years, it will never lead to total destruction of thought, which is what is called liberation from birth and death. The practitioner must therefore be ever on the alert and enquire within as to who has this experience, who realises its pleasantness. Without this enquiry he will go into a long trance or deep sleep [*yoga nidra*]. Due to the absence of a proper guide at this stage of spiritual practice, many have been deluded and fallen a prey to a false sense of liberation and only a few have managed to reach the goal safely.

The following story illustrates the point very well. A yogi was doing penance [*tapas*] for a number of years on the banks of the Ganges. When he had attained a high degree of concentration, he believed that continuance in that stage for prolonged periods constituted liberation and practised it. One day, before going into deep concentration, he felt thirsty and called to his disciple to bring a little drinking water from the Ganges. But before the disciple arrived with the water, he had gone into *yoga nidra* and remained in that state for countless years, during which time much water flowed under the bridge. When he woke up from this experience he immediately called 'Water! Water!'; but there was neither his disciple nor the Ganges in sight.

The first thing which he asked for was water because, before going into deep concentration, the topmost layer of thought in his mind was water and by concentration, however deep and prolonged it might have been, he had only been able temporarily to lull his thoughts. When he regained consciousness this topmost thought flew up with all the speed and force of a flood breaking through the dykes. If this is the case with regard to a thought which took shape immediately before he sat for meditation, there is no doubt that thoughts which took root earlier would also remain unannihilated. If annihilation of thoughts is liberation can he be said to have attained salvation?

Sadhakas [seekers] rarely understand the difference between this temporary stilling of the mind [*manolaya*] and permanent destruction of thoughts [*manonasa*]. In *manolaya* there is temporary subsidence of thought-waves, and though this temporary period may even last for a thousand years, thoughts, which are

thus temporarily stilled, rise up as soon as the *manolaya* ceases. One must therefore watch one's spiritual progress carefully. One must not allow oneself to be overtaken by such spells of stillness of thought. The moment one experiences this, one must revive consciousness and enquire within as to who it is who experiences this stillness. While not allowing any thoughts to intrude, one must not, at the same time, be overtaken by this deep sleep [*yoga nidra*] or self-hypnotism. Though this is a sign of progress towards the goal, yet it is also the point where the divergence between the road to liberation and *yoga nidra* takes place. The easy way, the direct way, the shortest cut to salvation is the enquiry method. By such enquiry, you will drive the thought force deeper till it reaches its source and merges therein. It is then that you will have the response from within and find that you rest there, destroying all thoughts, once and for all.[10]

Q: *This 'I'-thought rises from me. But I do not know the Self.*

A: All these are only mental concepts. You are now identifying yourself with a wrong 'I', which is the 'I'-thought. This 'I'-thought rises and sinks, whereas the true significance of 'I' is beyond both. There cannot be a break in your being. You who slept are also now awake. There is no unhappiness in your deep sleep whereas it exists now. What is it that has happened now so that this difference is experienced? There was no 'I'-thought in your sleep, whereas it is present now. The true 'I' is not apparent and the false 'I' is parading itself. This false 'I' is the obstacle to your right knowledge. Find out from where this false 'I' arises. Then it will disappear. You will then be only what you are, that is, absolute being.

Q: *How to do it? I have not succeeded so far.*

A: Search for the source of the 'I'-thought. That is all that one has to do. The universe exists on account of the 'I'-thought. If that ends there is an end to misery also. The false 'I' will end only when its source is sought.[11]

Again people often ask how the mind is controlled. I say to them, 'Show me the mind and then you will know what to do.' The fact is that the mind is only a bundle of thoughts. How can you extinguish it by the thought of doing so or by a desire? Your thoughts and desires are part and parcel of the mind. The mind is simply fattened by new thoughts rising up. Therefore it is foolish to attempt to kill the mind by means of the mind. The only way of doing it is to find its source and hold on to it. The mind will then

fade away of its own accord. Yoga teaches *chitta vritti nirodha* [control of the activities of the mind]. But I say *atma vichara* [self-investigation]. This is the practical way. *Chitta vritti nirodha* is brought about in sleep, swoon, or by starvation. As soon as the cause is withdrawn there is a recrudescence of thoughts. Of what use is it then? In the state of stupor there is peace and no misery. But misery recurs when the stupor is removed. So *nirodha* [control] is useless and cannot be of lasting benefit.

How then can the benefit be made lasting? It is by finding the cause of misery. Misery is due to the perception of objects. If they are not there, there will be no contingent thoughts and so misery is wiped off. 'How will objects cease to be?' is the next question. The *srutis* [scriptures] and the sages say that the objects are only mental creations. They have no substantive being. Investigate the matter and ascertain the truth of the statement. The result will be the conclusion that the objective world is in the subjective consciousness. The Self is thus the only reality which permeates and also envelops the world. Since there is no duality, no thoughts will arise to disturb your peace. This is realisation of the Self. The Self is eternal and so also is realisation.

Abhyasa [spiritual practice] consists in withdrawal within the Self every time you are disturbed by thought. It is not concentration or destruction of the mind but withdrawal into the Self.[12]

Q: *Why is concentration ineffective?*

A: To ask the mind to kill the mind is like making the thief the policeman. He will go with you and pretend to catch the thief, but nothing will be gained. So you must turn inward and see from where the mind rises and then it will cease to exist.

Q: *In turning the mind inwards, are we not still employing the mind?*

A: Of course we are employing the mind. It is well known and admitted that only with the help of the mind can the mind be killed. But instead of setting about saying there is a mind, and I want to kill it, you begin to seek the source of the mind, and you find the mind does not exist at all. The mind, turned outwards, results in thoughts and objects. Turned inwards, it becomes itself the Self.[13]

Q: *Even so, I do not understand. 'I', you say, is the wrong 'I' now. How to eliminate the wrong 'I'?*

A: You need not eliminate the wrong 'I'. How can 'I' eliminate

itself? All that you need do is to find out its origin and abide there. Your efforts can extend only thus far. Then the beyond will take care of itself. You are helpless there. No effort can reach it.

Q: *If 'I' am always, here and now, why do I not feel so?*

A: That is it. Who says it is not felt? Does the real 'I' say it or the false 'I'? Examine it. You will find it is the wrong 'I'. The wrong 'I' is the obstruction. It has to be removed in order that the true 'I' may not be hidden. The feeling that I have not realised is the obstruction to realisation. In fact it is already realised and there is nothing more to be realised. Otherwise, the realisation will be new. If it has not existed so far, it must take place hereafter. What is born will also die. If realisation is not eternal it is not worth having. Therefore what we seek is not that which must happen afresh. It is only that which is eternal but not now known due to obstructions. It is that which we seek. All that we need do is remove the obstruction. That which is eternal is not known to be so because of ignorance. Ignorance is the obstruction. Get over the ignorance and all will be well.

The ignorance is identical with the 'I'-thought. Find its source and it will vanish.

The 'I'-thought is like a spirit which, although not palpable, rises up simultaneously with the body, flourishes and disappears with it. The body-consciousness is the wrong 'I'. Give up this body-consciousness. It is done by seeking the source of the 'I'. The body does not say 'I am'. It is you who say, 'I am the body'. Find out who this 'I' is. Seeking its source it will vanish.[14]

Q: *How long can the mind stay or be kept in the Heart?*

A: The period extends by practice.

Q: *What happens at the end of the period?*

A: The mind returns to the present normal state. Unity in the Heart is replaced by a variety of perceived phenomena. This is called the outgoing mind. The Heart-going mind is called the resting mind.[15]

When one daily practises more and more in this manner, the mind will become extremely pure due to the removal of its defects and the practice will become so easy that the purified mind will plunge into the Heart as soon as the enquiry is commenced.[16]

Q: *Is it possible for a person who once has had the experience of* sat-chit-ananda *in meditation to identify himself with the body when out of meditation?*

A: Yes, it is possible, but he gradually loses the identification

in the course of his practice. In the floodlight of the Self the darkness of illusion dissipates for ever.[17]

Experience gained without rooting out all the *vasanas* cannot remain steady. Efforts must be made to eradicate the *vasanas*; knowledge can only remain unshaken after all the *vasanas* are rooted out.[18]

We have to contend against age-long mental tendencies. They will all go. Only they go comparatively soon in the case of those who have made *sadhana* in the past and later in the case of others.

Q: *Do these tendencies go gradually or will they suddenly all disappear one day? I ask this because although I have remained here for a long time I do not perceive any gradual change in me.*

A: When the sun rises, does the darkness go gradually or all at once?[19]

Q: *How can I tell if I am making progress with my enquiry?*

A: The degree of the absence of thoughts is the measure of your progress towards Self-realisation. But Self-realisation itself does not admit of progress, it is ever the same. The Self remains always in realisation. The obstacles are thoughts. Progress is measured by the degree of removal of the obstacles to understanding that the Self is always realised. So thoughts must be checked by seeking to whom they arise. So you go to their source, where they do not arise.

Q: *Doubts are always arising. Hence my question.*

A: A doubt arises and is cleared. Another arises and that is cleared, making way for yet another; and so it goes on. So there is no possibility of clearing away all doubts. See to whom the doubts arise. Go to their source and abide in it. Then they cease to arise. That is how doubts are to be cleared.[20]

Q: *Should I go on asking 'Who am I?' without answering? Who asks whom? Which* bhavana *[attitude] should be in the mind at the time of enquiry? What is 'I', the Self or the ego?*

A: In the enquiry 'Who am I?', 'I' is the ego. The question really means, what is the source or origin of this ego? You need not have any *bhavana* [attitude] in the mind. All that is required is that you must give up the *bhavana* that you are the body, of such and such a description, with such and such a name, etc. There is no need to have a *bhavana* about your real nature. It exists as it always does. It is real and no *bhavana*.[21]

Q: *But is it not funny that the 'I' should be searching for the 'I'? Does not the enquiry 'Who am I?' turn out in the end to be an*

empty formula? Or, am I to put the question to myself endlessly, repeating it like some mantra?

A: Self-enquiry is certainly not an empty formula and it is more than the repetition of any *mantra*. If the enquiry 'Who am I?' were a mere mental questioning, it would not be of much value. The very purpose of self-enquiry is to focus the entire mind at its source. It is not, therefore, a case of one 'I' searching for another 'I'. Much less is self-enquiry an empty formula, for it involves an intense activity of the entire mind to keep it steadily poised in pure Self-awareness.[22]

Q: *Is it enough if I spend some time in the mornings and some time in the evenings for this* atma-vichara? *Or should I do it always, even when I am writing or walking?*

A: What is your real nature? Is it writing, walking or being? The one unalterable reality is being. Until you realise that state of pure being you should pursue the enquiry. If once you are established in it there will be no further worry.

No one will enquire into the source of thoughts unless thoughts arise. So long as you think 'I am walking' or 'I am writing', enquire who does it.[23]

Q: *If I go on rejecting thoughts can I call it* vichara?

A: It may be a stepping stone. But really *vichara* begins when you cling to your Self and are already off the mental movement, the thought waves.

Q: *Then* vichara *is not intellectual?*

A: No, it is *antara vichara*, inner quest.[24]

Holding the mind and investigating it is advised for a beginner. But what is mind after all? It is a projection of the Self. See for whom it appears and from where it rises. The 'I'-thought will be found to be the root-cause. Go deeper. The 'I'-thought disappears and there is an infinitely expanded 'I'-consciousness.[25]

Q: *I asked Mother in Sri Aurobindo Ashram the following question: 'I keep my mind blank without thoughts arising so that God might show himself in his true being. But I do not perceive anything.' The reply was to this effect: 'The attitude is right. The power will come down from above. It is a direct experience.' Should I do anything further?*

A: Be what you are. There is nothing to come down or become manifest. All that is necessary is to lose the ego. That which is is always there. Even now you are that. You are not apart from it. The blank is seen by you. You are there to see the blank. What do

you wait for? The thought, 'I have not seen', the expectation to see and the desire of getting something, are all the workings of the ego. You have fallen into snares of the ego. The ego says all these and not you. Be yourself and nothing more!

Once born you reach something. If you reach it you return also. Therefore leave off all this verbiage. Be as you are. See who you are and remain as the Self, free from birth, going, coming and returning.[26]

Q: *How is one to know the Self?*

A: Knowing the Self means being the Self. Can you say that you do not know the Self? Though you cannot see your own eyes and though not provided with a mirror to look in, do you deny the existence of your eyes? Similarly, you are aware of the Self even though the Self is not objectified. Or, do you deny your Self because it is not objectified? When you say 'I cannot know the Self', it means absence in terms of relative knowledge, because you have been so accustomed to relative knowledge that you identify yourself with it. Such wrong identity has forged the difficulty of not knowing the obvious Self because it cannot be objectified. And then you ask 'how is one to know the Self?'

Q: *You talk of being. Being what?*

A: Your duty is to be and not to be this or that. 'I am that I am' sums up the whole truth. The method is summed up in the words 'Be still'. What does stillness mean? It means destroy yourself. Because any form or shape is the cause of trouble. Give up the notion that 'I am so and so'.[27] All that is required to realise the Self is to be still. What can be easier than that? Hence *atma-vidya* [Self-knowledge] is the easiest to attain.[28]

The truth of oneself alone is worthy to be scrutinised and known. Taking it as the target of one's attention, one should keenly know it in the Heart. This knowledge of oneself will be revealed only to the consciousness which is silent, clear and free from the activity of the agitated and suffering mind. Know that the consciousness which always shines in the Heart as the formless Self, 'I', and which is known by one's being still without thinking about anything as existent or non-existent, alone is the perfect reality.[29]

CHAPTER 6
Self-enquiry – misconceptions

Sri Ramana's philosophical pronouncements were very similar to those upheld by the followers of *advaita vedanta*, an Indian philosophical school which has flourished for well over a thousand years. Sri Ramana and the *advaitins* agree on most theoretical matters but their attitudes to practice are radically different. While Sri Ramana advocated self-enquiry, most *advaitic* teachers recommended a system of meditation which mentally affirmed that the Self was the only reality. These affirmations such as 'I am *Brahman*' or 'I am he', are usually used as *mantras*, or, more rarely, one meditates on their meaning and tries to experience the implications of the statement.

Because self-enquiry often starts with the question 'Who am I?', many of the traditional followers of *advaita* assumed that the answer to the question was 'I am *Brahman*' and they occupied their minds with repetitions of this mental solution. Sri Ramana criticised this approach by saying that while the mind was constantly engaged in finding or repeating solutions to the question it would never sink into its source and disappear. He was equally critical, for the same reason, of those who tried to use 'Who am I?' as a *mantra*, saying that both approaches missed the point of self-enquiry. The question 'Who am I?', he said, is not an invitation to analyse the mind and to come to conclusions about its nature, nor is it a *mantric* formula, it is simply a tool which facilitates redirecting attention from the objects of thought and perception to the thinker and perceiver of them. In Sri Ramana's opinion, the solution to the question 'Who am I?' is not to be found in or by the mind since the only real answer is the experience of the absence of mind.

Another widespread misunderstanding arose from the Hindu belief that the Self could be discovered by mentally rejecting all the objects of thought and perception as not-Self. Traditionally this is called the *neti-neti* approach (not this, not this). The practitioner of this system verbally rejects all the objects that the 'I' identifies

with – 'I am not the mind', 'I am not the body', etc. – in the expectation that the real 'I' will eventually be experienced in its pure uncontaminated form. Hinduism calls this practice 'self-enquiry' and, because of the identity of names, it was often confused with Sri Ramana's method. Sri Ramana's attitude to this traditional system of self-analysis was wholly negative and he discouraged his own followers from practising it by telling them that it was an intellectual activity which could not take them beyond the mind. In his standard reply to questions about the effectiveness of this practice he would say that the 'I'-thought is sustained by such acts of discrimination and that the 'I' which eliminates the body and the mind as 'not I' can never eliminate itself.

The followers of the 'I am *Brahman*' and '*neti-neti*' schools share a common belief that the Self can be discovered by the mind, either through affirmation or negation. This belief that the mind can, by its own activities, reach the Self is the root of most of the misconceptions about the practice of self-enquiry. A classic example of this is the belief that self-enquiry involves concentrating on a particular centre in the body called the Heart-centre. This widely-held view results from a misinterpretation of some of Sri Ramana's statements on the Heart, and to understand how this belief has come about it will be necessary to take a closer look at some of his ideas on the subject.

In describing the origin of the 'I'-thought he sometimes said that it rose to the brain through a channel which started from a centre in the right-hand side of the chest. He called this centre the Heart-centre and said that when the 'I'-thought subsided into the Self it went back into the centre and disappeared. He also said that when the Self is consciously experienced, there is a tangible awareness that this centre is the source of both the mind and the world. However, these statements are not strictly true and Sri Ramana sometimes qualified them by saying that they were only schematic representations which were given to those people who persisted in identifying with their bodies. He said that the Heart is not really located in the body and that from the highest standpoint it is equally untrue to say that the 'I'-thought arises and subsides into this centre on the right of the chest.

Because Sri Ramana often said 'Find the place where the "I" arises' or 'Find the source of the mind', many people interpreted these statements to mean that they should concentrate on this

particular centre while doing self-enquiry. Sri Ramana rejected this interpretation many times by saying that the source of the mind or the 'I' could only be discovered through attention to the 'I'-thought and not through concentration on a particular part of the body. He did sometimes say that putting attention on this centre is a good concentration practice, but he never associated it with self-enquiry. He also occasionally said that meditation on the Heart was an effective way of reaching the Self, but again, he never said that this should be done by concentrating on the Heart-centre. Instead he said that one should meditate on the Heart 'as it is'.[1] The Heart 'as it is' is not a location, it is the immanent Self and one can only be aware of its real nature by being it. It cannot be reached by concentration.

Although there are several potentially ambiguous comments of this kind about the Heart and the Heart-centre, in all his writings and recorded conversations there is not a single statement to support the contention that self-enquiry is to be practised by concentrating on this centre. In fact, by closely examining his statements on the subject one can only conclude that while the experience of the Self contains an awareness of this centre, concentration on this centre will not result in the experience of the Self.

Q: *I begin to ask myself 'Who am I?', eliminate the body as not 'I', the breath as not 'I', and I am not able to proceed further.*

A: Well, that is as far as the intellect can go. Your process is only intellectual. Indeed, all the scriptures mention the process only to guide the seeker to know the truth. The truth cannot be directly pointed out. Hence this intellectual process.

You see, the one who eliminates all the 'not I' cannot eliminate the 'I'. To say 'I am not this' or 'I am that' there must be the 'I'. This 'I' is only the ego or the 'I'-thought. After the rising up of this 'I'-thought, all other thoughts arise. The 'I'-thought is therefore the root-thought. If the root is pulled out all others are at the same time uprooted. Therefore seek the root 'I', question yourself 'Who am I?'. Find out its source, and then all these other ideas will vanish and the pure Self will remain.

Q: *How to do it?*

A: The 'I' is always there – in deep sleep, in dream and in wakefulness. The one in sleep is the same as that who now speaks.

There is always the feeling of 'I'. Otherwise do you deny your existence? You do not. You say 'I am'. Find out who is.[2]

Q: *I meditate* neti-neti *[not this – not this].*

A: No – that is not meditation. Find the source. You must reach the source without fail. The false 'I' will disappear and the real 'I' will be realised. The former cannot exist apart from the latter.[3]

There is now wrong identification of the Self with the body, senses, etc. You proceed to discard these, and this is *neti*. This can be done only by holding to the one which cannot be discarded. That is *iti* [that which is].[4]

Q: *When I think 'Who am I?', the answer comes 'I am not this mortal body but I am* chaitanya, atma *[consciousness, the Self].' And suddenly another question arises, 'Why has* atma *come into* maya *[illusion]?' or in other words, 'Why has God created this world?'*

A: To enquire 'Who am I?' really means trying to find out the source of the ego or the 'I'-thought. You are not to think of other thoughts, such as 'I am not this body'. Seeking the source of 'I' serves as a means of getting rid of all other thoughts. We should not give scope to other thoughts, such as you mention, but must keep the attention fixed on finding out the source of the 'I'-thought by asking, as each thought arises, to whom the thought arises. If the answer is 'I get the thought' continue the enquiry by asking 'Who is this "I" and what is its source?'[5]

Q: *Am I to keep on repeating 'Who am I?' so as to make a* mantra *of it?*

A: No. 'Who am I?' is not a *mantra*. It means that you must find out where in you arises the 'I'-thought which is the source of all other thoughts.[6]

Q: *Shall I meditate on 'I am* Brahman' *[*aham Brahmasmi*]?*

A: The text is not meant for thinking 'I am *Brahman*'. *Aham* ['I'] is known to every one. *Brahman* abides as *aham* in every one. Find out the 'I'. The 'I' is already *Brahman*. You need not think so. Simply find out the 'I'.

Q: *Is not discarding of the sheaths [*neti-neti*] mentioned in the* sastras*?*

A: After the rise of the 'I'-thought there is the false identification of the 'I' with the body, the senses, the mind, etc. 'I' is wrongly associated with them and the true 'I' is lost sight of. In order to sift the pure 'I' from the contaminated 'I', this discarding

is mentioned. But it does not mean exactly discarding of the non-Self, it means the finding of the real Self. The real Self is the infinite 'I'. That 'I' is perfection. It is eternal. It has no origin and no end. The other 'I' is born and also dies. It is impermanent. See to whom the changing thoughts belong. They will be found to arise after the 'I'-thought. Hold the 'I'-thought and they subside. Trace back the source of the 'I'-thought. The Self alone will remain.

Q: *It is difficult to follow. I understand the theory. But what is the practice?*

A: The other methods are meant for those who cannot take to the investigation of the Self. Even to repeat *aham Brahmasmi* or think of it, a doer is necessary. Who is it? It is 'I'. Be that 'I'. It is the direct method. The other methods also will ultimately lead everyone to this method of the investigation of the Self.

Q: *I am aware of the 'I'. Yet my troubles are not ended.*

A: This 'I'-thought is not pure. It is contaminated with the association of the body and senses. See to whom the trouble is. It is to the 'I'-thought. Hold it. Then the other thoughts vanish.

Q: *Yes. How to do it? That is the whole trouble.*

A: Think 'I, I', and hold to that one thought to the exclusion of all others.[7]

Q: *Is not affirmation of God more effective than the quest, 'Who am I?' Affirmation is positive, whereas the other is negation. Moreover, it indicates separateness.*

A: So long as you seek to know how to realise, this advice is given to find your Self. Your seeking the method denotes your separateness.

Q: *Is it not better to say 'I am the supreme being' than ask 'Who am I?'*

A: Who affirms? There must be one to do it. Find that one.

Q: *Is not meditation better than investigation?*

A: Meditation implies mental imagery, whereas investigation is for the reality. The former is objective, whereas the latter is subjective.

Q: *There must be a scientific approach to this subject.*

A: To eschew unreality and seek the reality is scientific.

Q: *I mean there must be a gradual elimination, first of the mind, then of the intellect, then of the ego.*

A: The Self alone is real. All others are unreal. The mind and intellect do not remain apart from you.

The Bible says, 'Be still and know that I am God.' Stillness is the sole requisite for the realisation of the Self as God.[8]

Q: *Is* soham *[the affirmation 'I am he'] the same as 'Who am I?'*

A: *Aham* ['I'] alone is common to them. One is *soham*. The other is *koham* (Who am I?]. They are different. Why should we go on saying *soham*? One must find out the real 'I'. In the question 'Who am I?', 'I' refers to the ego. Trying to trace it and find its source, we see it has no separate existence but merges in the real 'I'.[9]

You see the difficulty. *Vichara* is different in method from the meditation *sivoham* or *soham* ['I am Siva' or 'I am he']. I rather lay stress upon Self-knowledge, for you are first concerned with yourself before you proceed to know the world and its Lord. The *soham* meditation or 'I am *Brahman*' meditation is more or less a mental thought. But the quest for the Self I speak of is a direct method, indeed superior to the other meditation. The moment you start looking for the self and go deeper and deeper, the real Self is waiting there to take you in. Then whatever is done is done by something else and you have no hand in it. In this process, all doubts and discussions are automatically given up just as one who sleeps forgets, for the time being, all his cares.

Q: *What certainty is there that something else waits there to welcome me?*

A: When one is a sufficiently developed soul [*pakvi*] one becomes naturally convinced.

Q: *How is this development possible?*

A: Various answers are given. But whatever the previous development, *vichara* quickens the development.

Q: *That is arguing in a circle. I am developed and so I am suitable for the quest but the quest itself causes me to develop.*

A: The mind has always this sort of difficulty. It wants a certain theory to satisfy itself. Really, no theory is necessary for the man who seriously desires to approach God or to realise his own true being.[10]

Q: *No doubt the method taught by Bhagavan is direct. But it is so difficult. We do not know how to begin it. If we go on asking, 'Who am I?', 'Who am I?' like a* japa *[repetition of the name of God] or a* mantra, *it becomes dull. In other methods there is something preliminary and positive with which one can begin and then go step by step. But in Bhagavan's method, there is*

no such thing, and to seek the Self at once, though direct, is difficult.

A: You yourself concede it is the direct method. It is the direct and easy method. When going after other things that are alien to us is so easy, how can it be difficult for one to go to one's own Self? You talk of 'Where to begin?' There is no beginning and no end. You are yourself in the beginning and the end. If you are here and the Self somewhere else, and you have to reach that Self, you may be told how to start, how to travel and then how to reach. Suppose you who are now in Ramanasramam ask, 'I want to go to Ramanasramam. How shall I start and how to reach it?', what is one to say? A man's search for the Self is like that. He is always the Self and nothing else. You say 'Who am I?' becomes a *japa*. It is not meant that you should go on asking 'Who am I?' In that case, thought will not so easily die. In the direct method, as you call it, in asking yourself 'Who am I?', you are told to concentrate within yourself where the 'I'-thought, the root of all other thoughts, arises. As the Self is not outside but inside you, you are asked to dive within, instead of going without. What can be more easy than going to yourself? But the fact remains that to some this method will seem difficult and will not appeal. That is why so many different methods have been taught. Each of them will appeal to some as the best and easiest. That is according to their *pakva* or fitness. But to some, nothing except the *vichara marga* [the path of enquiry] will appeal. They will ask, 'You want me to know or to see this or that. But who is the knower, the seer?' Whatever other method may be chosen, there will be always a doer. That cannot be escaped. One must find out who the doer is. Till then, the *sadhana* cannot be ended. So eventually, all must come to find out 'Who am I?' You complain that there is nothing preliminary or positive to start with. You have the 'I' to start with. You know you exist always, whereas the body does not exist always, for example in sleep. Sleep reveals that you exist even without a body. We identify the 'I' with a body, we regard the Self as having a body, and as having limits, and hence all our trouble. All that we have to do is to give up identifying the Self with the body, with forms and limits, and then we shall know ourselves as the Self that we always are.[11]

Q: *Am I to think 'Who am I?'*

A: You have known that the 'I'-thought springs forth. Hold the 'I'-thought and find its source.

Q: *May I know the way?*

A: Do as you have now been told and see.

Q: *I do not understand what I should do.*

A: If it is anything objective the way can be shown objectively. This is subjective.

Q: *But I do not understand.*

A: What! Do you not understand that you are?

Q: *Please tell me the way.*

A: Is it necessary to show the way in the interior of your own home? This is within you.[12]

Q: *You have said that the Heart is the centre of the Self.*

A: Yes, it is the one supreme centre of the Self. You need have no doubt about it. The real Self is there in the Heart behind the *jiva* or ego-self.

Q: *Now be pleased to tell me where it is in the body.*

A: You cannot know it with your mind. You cannot realise it by imagination, when I tell you here is the centre [pointing to the right side of the chest]. The only direct way to realise it is to cease to fantasise and try to be yourself. When you realise, you automatically feel that the centre is there.

This is the centre, the Heart, spoken of in the scriptures as *hrit-guha* [cavity of the heart], *arul* [grace], *ullam* [the Heart].

Q: *In no book have I found it stated that it is there.*

A: Long after I came here I chanced upon a verse in the Malayalam version of *Ashtangahridayam*, the standard work on *ayurveda* [Hindu medicine], wherein the *ojas sthana* [source of bodily vitality or place of light] is mentioned as being located in the right side of the chest and called the seat of consciousness [*samvit*]. But I know of no other work which refers to it as being located there.

Q: *Can I be sure that the ancients meant this centre by the term 'Heart'?*

A: Yes, that is so. But you should try to have rather than to locate the experience. A man need not find out where his eyes are situated when he wants to see. The Heart is there ever open to you if you care to enter it, ever supporting all your movements even when you are unaware. It is perhaps more proper to say that the Self is the Heart itself than to say that it is in the Heart. Really, the Self is the centre itself. It is everywhere, aware of itself as 'Heart', the Self-awareness.[13]

Q: *In that case, how can it be localised in any part of the*

body? Fixing a place for the Heart would imply setting physiological limitations to that which is beyond space and time.

A: That is right. But the person who puts the question about the position of the Heart considers himself as existing with or in the body. While putting the question now, would you say that your body alone is here but you are speaking from somewhere else? No, you accept your bodily existence. It is from this point of view that any reference to a physical body comes to be made.

Truly speaking, pure consciousness is indivisible, it is without parts. It has no form and shape, no 'within' and 'without'. There is no 'right' or 'left' for it. Pure consciousness, which is the Heart, includes all, and nothing is outside or apart from it. That is the ultimate truth.

From this absolute standpoint, the Heart, Self or consciousness can have no particular place assigned to it in the physical body. What is the reason? The body is itself a mere projection of the mind, and the mind is but a poor reflection of the radiant Heart. How can that, in which everything is contained, be itself confined as a tiny part within the physical body which is but an infinitesimal, phenomenal manifestation of the one reality?

But people do not understand this. They cannot help thinking in terms of the physical body and the world. For instance, you say, 'I have come to this ashram all the way from my country beyond the Himalayas.' But that is not the truth. Where is 'coming' or 'going' or any movement whatever, for the one, all-pervading spirit which you really are? You are where you have always been. It is your body that moved or was conveyed from place to place till it reached this ashram. This is the simple truth, but to a person who considers himself a subject living in an objective world, it appears as something altogether visionary!

It is by coming down to the level of ordinary understanding that a place is assigned to the Heart in the physical body.

Q: *How then shall I understand Sri Bhagavan's statement that the experience of the Heart-centre is at the particular place in the chest?*

A: Once you accept that from the true and absolute standpoint, the Heart as pure consciousness is beyond space and time, it will be easy for you to understand the rest in its correct perspective.[14]

Q: *The Heart is said to be on the right, on the left, or in the centre. With such differences of opinion how are we to meditate on it?*

A: You are and it is a fact. *Dhyana* [meditation] is by you, of you, and in you. It must go on where you are. It cannot be outside you. So you are the centre of *dhyana* and that is the Heart.

Doubts arise only when you identify it with something tangible and physical. Heart is no conception, no object for meditation. But it is the seat of meditation. The Self remains all alone. You see the body in the Heart, the world is also in it. There is nothing separate from it. So all kinds of effort are located there only.[15]

Q: *You say the 'I'-thought rises from the Heart-centre. Should we seek its source there?*

A: I ask you to see where the 'I' arises in your body, but it is really not quite correct to say that the 'I' rises from and merges in the Heart in the right side of the chest. The Heart is another name for the reality and it is neither inside nor outside the body. There can be no in or out for it, since it alone is.[16]

Q: *Should I meditate on the right chest in order to meditate on the Heart?*

A: The Heart is not physical. Meditation should not be on the right or the left. Meditation should be on the Self. Everyone knows 'I am'. Who is the 'I'? It will be neither within nor without, neither on the right nor on the left. 'I am' – that is all.[17] Leave alone the idea of right and left. They pertain to the body. The Heart is the Self. Realise it and then you will see for yourself.[18] There is no need to know where and what the Heart is. It will do its work if you engage in the quest for the Self.[19]

Q: *What is the Heart referred to in the verse of* Upadesa Saram *where it is said, 'Abiding in the Heart is the best* karma, *yoga,* bhakti *and* jnana*?'*

A: That which is the source of all, that in which all live, and that into which all finally merge, is the Heart referred to.

Q: *How can we conceive of such a Heart?*

A: Why should you conceive of anything? You have only to see from where the 'I' springs.[20] That from which all thoughts of embodied beings issue forth is called the Heart. All descriptions of it are only mental concepts.[21]

Q: *There are said to be six organs of different colours in the chest, of which the Heart is said to be two finger-breadths to the right of the middle line.*[22] *But the Heart is also formless. Should we then imagine it to have a shape and meditate on it?*

A: No. Only the quest 'Who am I?' is necessary. What remains all through deep sleep and waking is the same. But in waking

there is unhappiness and the effort to remove it. Asked who wakes up from sleep you say 'I'. Now you are told to hold fast to this 'I'. If it is done the eternal being will reveal itself. Investigation of 'I' is the point and not meditation on the Heart-centre. There is nothing like within or without. Both mean either the same thing or nothing.

Of course there is also the practice of meditation on the Heart-centre. It is only a practice and not investigation. Only the one who meditates on the Heart can remain aware when the mind ceases to be active and remains still, whereas those who meditate on other centres cannot be so aware but infer that the mind was still only after it becomes again active.[23]

In whatever place in the the body one thinks Self to be residing, due to the power of that thinking it will appear to the one who thinks thus as if Self is residing in that place. However, the beloved Heart alone is the refuge for the rising and subsiding of that 'I'. Know that though it is said that the Heart exists both inside and outside, in absolute truth it does not exist both inside and outside, because the body, which appears as the base of the differences 'inside' and 'outside', is an imagination of the thinking mind. Heart, the source, is the beginning, the middle and the end of all. Heart, the supreme space, is never a form. It is the light of truth.[24]

CHAPTER 7
Surrender

Many of the world's religious traditions advocate surrender to God as a means of transcending the individual self. Sri Ramana accepted the validity of such an approach and often said that this method was as effective as self-enquiry. Traditionally the path of surrender is associated with dualistic devotional practices, but such activities were only of secondary importance to Sri Ramana. Instead he stressed that true surrender transcended worshipping God in a subject – object relationship since it could only be successfully accomplished when the one who imagined that he was separate from God had ceased to exist. To achieve this goal he recommended two distinct practices:

1 Holding on to the 'I'-thought until the one who imagines that he is separate from God disappears.
2 Completely surrendering all responsibility for one's life to God or the Self. For such self-surrender to be effective one must have no will or desire of one' own and one must be completely free of the idea that there is an individual person who is capable of acting independently of God.

The first method is clearly self-enquiry masquerading under a different name. Sri Ramana often equated the practices of surrender and enquiry either by saying that they were different names for the same process or that they were the only two effective means by which Self-realisation could be achieved. This is quite consistent with his view that any practice which involved awareness of the 'I'-thought was a valid and direct route to the Self, whereas all practices which didn't were not.

This insistence on the subjective awareness of 'I' as the only means of reaching the Self coloured his attitude towards practices of devotion (*bhakti*) and worship which are usually associated with surrender to God. He never discouraged his devotees from following such practices, but he pointed out that any relationship

with God (devotee, worshipper, servant, etc.) was an illusory one since God alone exists. True devotion, he said, is to remain as one really is, in the state of being in which all ideas about relationships with God have ceased to exist.

The second method, of surrendering responsibility for one's life to God, is also related to self-enquiry since it aims to eliminate the 'I'-thought by separating it from the objects and actions that it constantly identifies with. In following this practice there should be a constant awareness that there is no individual 'I' who acts or desires, that only the Self exists and that there is nothing apart from the Self that is capable of acting independently of it. When following this practice, whenever one becomes aware that one is assuming responsibility for thoughts and actions – for example, 'I want' or 'I am doing this' – one should try to withdraw the mind from its external contacts and fix it in the Self. This is analogous to the transfer of attention which takes place in self-enquiry when one realises that self-attention has been lost. In both cases the aim is to isolate the 'I'-thought and make it disappear in its source.

Sri Ramana himself admitted that spontaneous and complete surrender of the 'I' by this method was an impossible goal for many people and so he sometimes advised his followers to undertake preliminary exercises which would cultivate their devotion and control their minds. Most of these practices involved thinking of or meditating on God or the Guru either by constantly repeating his name (*japa*) or by visualising his form. He told his devotees that if this was done regularly with love and devotion then the mind would become effortlessly absorbed in the object of meditation.

Once this has been achieved complete surrender becomes much easier. The constant awareness of God prevents the mind from identifying with other objects and enhances the conviction that God alone exists. It also produces a reciprocal flow of power or grace from the Self which weakens the hold of the 'I'-thought and destroys the *vasanas* which perpetuate and reinforce its existence. Eventually the 'I'-thought is reduced to manageable proportions and with a little self-attention it can be made to sink temporarily into the Heart.

As with self-enquiry, final realisation is brought about automatically by the power of the Self. When all the outgoing tendencies of the mind have been dissolved in the repeated experiences of being, the Self destroys the vestigial 'I'-thought so

completely that it never rises again. This final destruction of the 'I' takes place only if the self-surrender has been completely motiveless. If it is done with a desire for grace or Self-realisation it can never be more than partial surrender, a business transaction in which the 'I'-thought makes an effort in the expectation of receiving a reward.

Q: *What is unconditional surrender?*

A: If one surrenders oneself there will be no one to ask questions or to be thought of. Either the thoughts are eliminated by holding on to the root-thought 'I', or one surrenders oneself unconditionally to the higher power. These are the only two ways for realisation.[1]

Q: *Does not total or complete surrender require that one should not have left even the desire for liberation or God?*

A: Complete surrender does require that you have no desire of your own. You must be satisfied with whatever God gives you and that means having no desires of your own.

Q: *Now that I am satisfied on that point, I want to know what the steps are by which I could achieve surrender.*

A: There are two ways. One is looking into the source of 'I' and merging into that source. The other is feeling 'I am helpless by myself, God alone is all-powerful and except by throwing myself completely on him, there is no other means of safety for me.' By this method one gradually develops the conviction that God alone exists and that the ego does not count. Both methods lead to the same goal. Complete surrender is another name for *jnana* or liberation.[2]

Q: *I find surrender is easier. I want to adopt that path.*

A: By whatever path you go, you will have to lose yourself in the one. Surrender is complete only when you reach the stage 'Thou art all' and 'Thy will be done'.

The state is not different from *jnana*. In *soham* [the affirmation of 'I am he'] there is *dvaita* [dualism]. In surrender there is *advaita* [non-dualism]. In the reality there is neither *dvaita* nor *advaita*, but that which is. Surrender appears easy because people imagine that, once they say with their lips 'I surrender' and put their burdens on their Lord, they can be free and do what they like. But the fact is that you can have no likes or dislikes after your surrender; your will should become completely non-existent, the

Lord's will taking its place. The death of the ego in this way brings about a state which is not different from *jnana*. So by whatever path you may go, you must come to *jnana* or oneness.[3]

Q: *What is the best way of killing the ego?*

A: To each person that way is the best which appears easiest or appeals most. All the ways are equally good, as they lead to the same goal, which is the merging of the ego in the Self. What the *bhakta* [devotee] calls surrender, the man who does *vichara* calls *jnana*. Both are trying only to take the ego back to the source from which it sprang and make it merge there.[4]

Q: *Cannot grace hasten such competence in a seeker?*

A: Leave it to God. Surrender unreservedly. One of two things must be done. Either surrender because you admit your inability and require a higher power to help you, or investigate the cause of misery by going to the source and merging into the Self. Either way you will be free from misery. God never forsakes one who has surrendered.

Q: *What is the drift of the mind after surrender?*

A: Is the surrendered mind raising the question?[5]

Q: *By constantly desiring to surrender I hope that increasing grace is experienced.*

A: Surrender once for all and be done with the desire. So long as the sense of doership is retained there is the desire. That is also personality. If this goes the Self is found to shine forth pure. The sense of doership is the bondage and not the actions themselves.

'Be still and know that I am God.' Here stillness is total surrender without a vestige of individuality. Stillness will prevail and there will be no agitation of mind. Agitation of mind is the cause of desire, the sense of doership and personality. If that is stopped there is quiet. There 'knowing' means 'being'. It is not the relative knowledge involving the triads, knowledge, knowing and known.

Q: *Is the thought 'I am God' or 'I am the supreme being' helpful?*

A: 'I am that I am.' 'I am' is God, not thinking 'I am God.' Realise 'I am' and do not think 'I am.' 'Know I am God,' it is said, and not 'Think I am God.'[6]

All talk of surrender is like pinching brown sugar from a brown sugar image of Lord Ganesa and offering it as *naivedya* [food offering] to the same Lord Ganesa. You say you offer your body, soul and all possessions to God. Were they yours that you could

offer them? At best, you can only say, 'I falsely imagined till now that all these which are yours were mine. Now I realise they are yours. I shall no more act as if they are mine.' This knowledge that there is nothing but God or Self, that I and mine don't exist and that only the Self exists, is *jnana*. Thus there is no difference between *bhakti* and *jnana*. *Bhakti* is *jnana mata* or the mother of *jnana*.[7]

Q: *Men of the world that we are, we have some kind of grief or another and do not know how to get over it. We pray to God and still are not satisfied. What can we do?*

A: Trust God.

Q: *We surrender; but still there is no help.*

A: Yes. If you have surrendered, you must be able to abide by the will of God and not make a grievance of what may not please you. Things may turn out differently from the way they look apparently. Distress often leads men to faith in God.

Q: *But we are worldly. There is the wife, there are the children, friends and relatives. We cannot ignore their existence and resign ourselves to divine will, without retaining some little of the personality in us.*

A: That means you have not surrendered as professed by you. You must only trust God.[8]

Surrender to him and abide by his will whether he appears or vanishes. Await his pleasure. If you ask him to do as you please, it is not surrender but command to him. You cannot have him obey you and yet think that you have surrendered. He knows what is best and when and how to do it. Leave everything entirely to him. His is the burden, you have no longer any cares. All your cares are his. Such is surrender. This is *bhakti*.

Or, enquire to whom these questions arise. Dive deep in the Heart and remain as the Self. One of these two ways is open to the aspirant.[9]

Q: *Surrender is impossible.*

A: Yes. Complete surrender is impossible in the beginning. Partial surrender is certainly possible for all. In course of time that will lead to complete surrender. Well, if surrender is impossible, what can be done? There is no peace of mind. You are helpless to bring it about. It can be done only by surrender.[10]

Q: *Is surrender, by itself, sufficient to reach the Self?*

A: It is enough that one surrenders oneself. Surrender is to give oneself up to the original cause of one's being. Do not delude

yourself by imagining such a source to be some God outside you. Your source is within yourself. Give yourself up to it. That means that you should seek the source and merge in it.[11]

Q: *[Given to Sri Ramana in the form of a written note.] They say that one can obtain everything if one takes refuge in God wholly and solely, and without thought of anything else. Does it mean sitting still in one place and contemplating God entirely at all times, discarding all thoughts, including even thoughts about food, which is essential for the sustenance of the body? Does it mean that when one gets ill, one should not think of medicine and treatment, but entrust one's health or sickness exclusively to providence?*

In the Bhagavad Gita *it says: 'The man who sheds all longing and moves without concern, free from the sense of "I" and "mine", he attains peace' (2:71). It means the discarding of all desires. Therefore should we devote ourselves exclusively to the contemplation of God, and accept food and water only if they are available by God's grace, without asking for them? Or does it mean that we should make a little effort? Bhagavan, please explain the secret of this* saranagati *[surrender].*

A: [After reading the note Sri Ramana addressed everyone in the room.] *Ananya saranagati* [complete surrender] means to be without any attachment to thoughts, no doubt, but does it mean to discard even thoughts of food and water which are essential for the sustenance of the physical body? He asks, 'Should I eat only if I get anything by God's direction, and without my asking for it? Or should I make a little effort?' All right. Let us take it that what we have to eat comes of its own accord. But even then, who is to eat? Suppose somebody puts it in our mouth, should we not swallow it at least? Is that not an effort? He asks, 'If I become sick, should I take medicine or should I keep quiet leaving my health and sickness in the hands of God?' In the book *Sadhana Panchakam* written by Sankara, it is stated that for treatment of the disease called hunger one should eat food received as alms. But then one must at least go out and beg for it. If all people close their eyes and sit still saying if the food comes we eat, how is the world to get on? Hence one must take things as they come in accordance with one's traditions, but one must be free from the feeling that one is doing them oneself. The feeling that I am doing it is the bondage. It is therefore necessary to consider and find out the method whereby such a feeling can be overcome, instead of

doubting as to whether medicine should be administered if one is sick or whether food should be taken if one is hungry. Such doubts will continue to come up and will never end. Even such doubts as 'May I groan if there is pain? May I inhale air after exhaling?' also occur. Call it *Iswara* [God] or call it *karma* [destiny]; some *karta* [higher power] will carry on everything in this world according to the development of the mind of each individual. If the responsibility is thrown on the higher power things will go on of their own accord. We walk on this ground. While doing so, do we consider at every step whether we should raise one leg after the other or stop at some stage? Isn't the walking done automatically? The same is the case with inhaling and exhaling. No special effort is made to inhale or exhale. The same is the case with this life also. Can we give up anything if we want to, or do anything as we please? Quite a number of things are done automatically without our being conscious of it. Complete surrender to God means giving up all thoughts and concentrating the mind on him. If we can concentrate on him, other thoughts disappear. If the actions of the mind, speech and body are merged with God, all the burdens of our life will be on him.[12]

Q: *But is God really the doer of all the actions I perform?*

A: The present difficulty is that man thinks he is the doer. But it is a mistake. It is the higher power which does everything and man is only a tool. If he accepts that position he is free from troubles, otherwise he courts them. Take, for instance, the sculpted figure at the base of a *gopuram* [temple tower], which is made to appear as if it is bearing the burden of the tower on its shoulder. Its posture and look are a picture of great strain which gives the impression that it is bearing the weight of the tower. But think. The tower is built on the earth and it rests on its foundations. The figure is a part of the tower, but it is made to look as if it is bearing the weight of the tower. Is it not funny? So also is the man who takes on himself the sense of doing.[13]

Q: *Swami, it is good to love God, is it not? Then why not follow the path of love?*

A: Who said you couldn't follow it? You can do so. But when you talk of love, there is duality, is there not – the person who loves and the entity called God who is loved? The individual is not separate from God. Hence love means one has love towards one's own Self.

Q: *That is why I am asking you whether God could be worshipped through the path of love.*

A: That is exactly what I have been saying. Love itself is the actual form of God. If by saying, 'I do not love this, I do not love that', you reject all things, that which remains is *swarupa*, that is the real form of the Self. That is pure bliss. Call it pure bliss, God, *atma*, or what you will. That is devotion, that is realisation and that is everything.

If you thus reject everything, what remains is the Self alone. That is real love. One who knows the secret of that love finds the world itself full of universal love.[14]

The experience of not forgetting consciousness alone is the state of devotion [*bhakti*] which is the relationship of unfading real love, because the real knowledge of Self, which shines as the undivided supreme bliss itself, surges up as the nature of love.

Only if one knows the truth of love, which is the real nature of Self, will the strong entangled knot of life be untied. Only if one attains the height of love will liberation be attained. Such is the heart of all religions. The experience of Self is only love, which is seeing only love, hearing only love, feeling only love, tasting only love and smelling only love, which is bliss.[15]

Q: *I long for* bhakti. *I want more of this longing. Even realisation does not matter for me. Let me be strong in my longing.*

A: If the longing is there, realisation will be forced on you even if you do not want it.[16] Long for it intensely so that the mind melts in devotion. After camphor burns away no residue is left. The mind is the camphor. When it has resolved itself into the Self without leaving even the slightest trace behind, it is realisation of the Self.[17]

Q: *I have faith in* murti dhyana *[worship of form]. Will it not help me to gain* jnana*?*

A: Surely it will. *Upasana* [meditation] helps concentration of mind. Then the mind is free from other thoughts and is full of the meditated form. The mind then becomes one with the object of meditation, and this makes it quite pure. Then think who is the worshipper. The answer is 'I', that is, the Self. In this way the Self is ultimately gained.[18]

Worshipping the formless reality by unthought thought is the best kind of worship. But when one is not fit for such formless worship of God, worship of form alone is suitable. Formless worship is possible only for people who are devoid of the ego-form. Know that all the worship done by people who possess the ego-form is only worship of form.

The pure state of being attached to grace [Self], which is devoid of any attachment, alone is one's own state of silence, which is devoid of any other thing. Know that one's ever abiding as that silence, having experienced it as it is, alone is true mental worship [*manasika-puja*]. Know that the performance of the unceasing, true and natural worship in which the mind is submissively established as the one Self, having installed the Lord on the Heart-throne, is silence, the best of all forms of worship. Silence, which is devoid of the assertive ego, alone is liberation. The evil forgetfulness of Self which causes one to slip down from that silence, alone is non-devotion [*vibhakti*]. Know that abiding as that silence with the mind subsided as non-different from Self, is the truth of Siva *bhakti* [devotion to God].

When one has completely surrendered oneself at the feet of Siva, thereby becoming of the nature of the Self, the resulting abundant peace, in which there is not even the least room within the Heart for one to make any complaint about one's defects and deficiencies, alone is the nature of supreme devotion. One's thus becoming a slave to the Lord and one's remaining quiet and silent, devoid even of the egotistical thought 'I am his slave', is Self-abidance, and this is the supreme knowledge.[19]

Q: *Can spiritual seekers attain this goal in life if they go about the world absorbed in singing songs in praise of God? Or should they stay at one place only?*

A: It is good to keep the mind concentrated on one thing only wherever the person wanders. What is the use of keeping the body at one place if the mind is allowed to wander?

Q: *Is* ahetuka bhakti *[devotion without a motive] possible?*

A: Yes it is possible.[20] Worshipping God for the sake of a desired object is worshipping that desired object alone. The complete cessation of any thought of a desired object is the first prerequisite in a mind which wishes to attain the state of Siva.[21]

Q: Sri Bhagavatam *outlines a way to find Krishna in the Heart by prostrating to all and looking on all as the Lord himself. Is this the right path leading to Self-realisation? Is it not easier to adore Bhagavan in whatever meets the mind, than to seek the supramental through the mental enquiry 'Who am I?'*

A: Yes, when you see God in all, do you think of God or do

you not? You must certainly think of God if you want to see God all round you. Keeping God in your mind in this way becomes *dhyana* [meditation] and *dhyana* is the stage before realisation. Realisation can only be in and of the Self. It can never be apart from the Self. *Dhyana* must precede realisation, but whether you make *dhyana* on God or on the Self is immaterial, for the goal is the same. You cannot, by any means, escape the Self. You want to see God in all, but not in yourself? If everything is God, are you not included in that everything? Being God yourself, is it a wonder that all is God? This is the method advised in *Sri Bhagavatam*, and elsewhere by others. But even for this practice there must be the seer or thinker. Who is he?

Q: *How to see God who is all-pervasive?*

A: To see God is to be God. There is no all apart from God for him to pervade. He alone is.[22]

Q: *The* bhakta *requires a God to whom he can do* bhakti. *Is he to be taught that there is only the Self, not a worshipper and the worshipped?*

A: Of course, God is required for *sadhana*. But the end of the *sadhana*, even in *bhakti marga* [the path of devotion], is attained only after complete surrender. What does it mean, except that effacement of the ego results in Self remaining as it always has been? Whatever path one may choose, the 'I' is inescapable, the 'I' that does the *nishkama karma* [motiveless acts], the 'I' that pines for joining the Lord from whom it feels it has been separated, the 'I' that feels it has slipped from its real nature, and so on. The source of this 'I' must be found out. Then all questions will be solved.[23]

Q: *If 'I' also is an illusion, who then casts off the illusion?*

A: The 'I' casts off the illusion of 'I' and yet remains as 'I'. Such is the paradox of Self-realisation. The realised do not see any contradiction in it. Take the case of *bhakti*. I approach *Iswara* and pray to be absorbed in him. I then surrender myself with faith and concentrate on him. What remains afterwards? In place of the original 'I', perfect self-surrender leaves a residuum of God in which the 'I' is lost. This is the highest form of devotion [*parabhakti*] and surrender and the height of *vairagya* [non-attachment].

You give up this and that of 'my' possessions. If you give up 'I' and 'mine' instead, all are given up at a stroke. The very seed of possession is lost. Thus the evil is nipped in the bud or crushed in the germ itself. Dispassion [*vairagya*] must be very strong to do this. Eagerness to do it must be equal to that of a man kept under water trying to rise up to the surface for his life.[24]

PART THREE

The Guru

God and Guru are in truth not different. Just as the prey that has fallen into the jaws of a tiger cannot escape, so those who have come under the glance of the Guru's grace will surely be saved and will never be forsaken; yet one should follow without fail the path shown by the Guru.[1]

From Bhagavan's point of view there are no disciples but from the point of view of the disciple the grace of the Guru is like an ocean. If he comes with a cup he will only get a cupful. It is no use complaining of the niggardliness of the ocean; the bigger the vessel the more he will be able to carry. It is entirely up to him.[2]

One method of securing the temporary cessation of mental activities is association with sages. They are adepts in *samadhi* and it has become easy, natural and perpetual with them. Those moving with them closely, and in sympathetic contact, gradually absorb the *samadhi* habit from them.[3]

CHAPTER 8
The Guru

The term Guru is often loosely used to describe anyone who gives out spiritual advice, but in Sri Ramana's vocabulary the word has a much more restricted definition. For him, a true Guru is someone who has realised the Self and who is able to use his power to assist others towards the goal of Self-realisation.

Sri Ramana often said that God, Guru and the Self are identical; the Guru is God in human form and, simultaneously, he is also the Self in the Heart of each devotee. Because he is both inside and outside, his power works in two different ways. The outer Guru gives instructions and by his power enables the devotee to keep his attention on the Self; the inner Guru pulls the devotee's mind back to its source, absorbs it in the Self and finally destroys it.

It is a basic tenet of Sri Ramana's teaching that a Guru is necessary for almost everyone who is striving towards a permanent awareness of the Self. The catalytic role of the Guru in spiritual development is therefore crucial; except in rare instances, ignorance of the Self is so deeply rooted that individual seekers are unable to escape from it by their own efforts.

Although Sri Ramana taught that a Guru is indispensable for those seeking Self-realisation, he also pointed out that the Guru has no power to bring about realisation in those who are not energetically seeking it. If the individual seeker makes a serious attempt to discover the Self, then the grace and power of the Guru will automatically start to flow. If no such attempt is made, the Guru is helpless.

The conversations in this chapter summarise Sri Ramana's views on the nature of the Guru and the role he plays in bringing about realisation of the Self. The distinctive way in which Sri Ramana utilised his own power will be explored in greater detail in chapter nine.

Q: *What is Guru's grace? How does it lead to Self-realisation?*

A: Guru is the Self. Sometimes in his life a man becomes dissatisfied and, not content with what he has, he seeks the satisfaction of his desires through prayer to God. His mind is gradually purified until he longs to know God, more to obtain his grace than to satisfy his worldly desires. Then, God's grace begins to manifest. God takes the form of a Guru and appears to the devotee, teaches him the truth and, moreover, purifies his mind by association. The devotee's mind gains strength and is then able to turn inward. By meditation it is further purified and it remains still without the least ripple. That calm expanse is the Self.

The Guru is both external and internal. From the exterior he gives a push to the mind to turn it inwards. From the interior he pulls the mind towards the Self and helps in the quietening of the mind. That is Guru's grace. There is no difference between God, Guru and the Self.

Q: *In the Theosophical Society they meditate in order to seek masters to guide them.*

A: The master is within; meditation is meant to remove the ignorant idea that he is only outside. If he is a stranger whom you await, he is bound to disappear also. What is the use of a transient being like that? But so long as you think you are separate or that you are the body, an external master is also necessary and he will appear to have a body. When the wrong identification of oneself with the body ceases, the master will be found to be none other than the Self.

Q: *Will the Guru help us to know the Self through initiation?*

A: Does the Guru hold you by the hand and whisper in the ear? You may imagine him to be what you are yourself. Because you think you are with a body, you think he also has a body and that he will do something tangible to you. His work lies within, in the spiritual realm.

Q: *How is the Guru found?*

A: God, who is immanent, in his grace takes pity on the loving devotee and manifests himself according to the devotee's development. The devotee thinks that he is a man and expects a relationship between two physical bodies. But the Guru who is God or the Self incarnate works from within, helps the man to see the error of his ways and guides him on the right path until he realises the Self within.[1]

Q: *What are the marks of a real teacher* [sadguru]*?*

A: Steady abidance in the Self, looking at all with an equal eye unshakeable courage at all times, in all places and circumstances.[2]

Q: *There are a number of spiritual teachers teaching various paths. Whom should one take for one's Guru?*

A: Choose that one where you find you get *shanti* [peace].[3]

Q: *Should we not also consider his teachings?*

A: He who instructs an ardent seeker to do this or that is not a true master. The seeker is already afflicted by his activities and wants peace and rest. In other words he wants cessation of his activities. If a teacher tells him to do something in addition to, or in place of, his other activities, can that be a help to the seeker?

Activity is creation. Activity is the destruction of one's inherent happiness. If activity is advocated the adviser is not a master but a killer. In such circumstances either the creator [Brahma] or death [Yama] may be said to have come in the guise of a master. Such a person cannot liberate the aspirant, he can only strengthen his fetters.[4]

Q: *How can I find my own Guru?*

A: By intense meditation.[5]

Q: *If it is true that the Guru is one's own Self, what is the principle underlying the doctrine which says that, however learned a disciple may be or whatever occult powers he may possess, he cannot attain Self-realisation without the grace of the Guru?*

A: Although in absolute truth the state of the Guru is that of oneself [the Self], it is very hard for the self which has become the individual [*jiva*] through ignorance to realise its true state or nature without the grace of the Guru.

Q: *What are the marks of the Guru's grace?*

A: It is beyond words or thoughts.

Q: *If that is so, how is it that it is said that the disciple realises his true state by the Guru's grace?*

A: It is like the elephant which wakes up on seeing a lion in its dream. Even as the elephant wakes up at the mere sight of the lion, so too is it certain that the disciple wakes up from the sleep of ignorance into the wakefulness of true knowledge through the Guru's benevolent look of grace.

Q: *What is the significance of the saying that the nature of the real Guru is that of the supreme Lord* [sarvesvara]*?*

A: First, the individual soul which desires to attain the state of Godhood, or the state of true knowledge, practises incessant

devotion. When the individual's devotion has reached a mature stage, the Lord, who is the witness of that individual soul and identical with it, manifests. He appears in human form with the help of *sat-chit-ananda*, his three natural features, and form and name which he also graciously assumes. In the guise of blessing the disciple he absorbs him in himself. According to this doctrine the Guru can truly be called the Lord.

Q: *How then did some great persons attain knowledge without a Guru?*

A: To a few mature persons the Lord shines as the formless light of knowledge and imparts awareness of the truth.[6]

Q: *How is one to decide upon a proper Guru? What is the* swarupa *[nature or real form] of a Guru?*

A: He is the proper Guru to whom your mind is attuned. If you ask, 'How to decide who is the Guru and what is his *swarupa*?', he should be endowed with tranquillity, patience, forgiveness and other virtues; he should be capable of attracting others even with his eyes just as a magnet attracts iron; he should have a feeling of equality towards all. He who has these virtues is the true Guru, but if one wants to know the *swarupa* of the Guru, one must know one's own *swarupa* first. How can one know the real nature of the Guru if one does not know one's own real nature first? If you want to perceive the real nature or form of the Guru you must first learn to look upon the whole universe as *Guru rupam* [the form of the Guru]. One must see the Guru in all living beings. It is the same with God. You must look upon all objects as God's *rupa* [form]. How can he who does not know his own Self perceive the real form of God or the real form of the Guru? How can he determine them? Therefore, first of all know your own real form and nature.

Q: *Isn't a Guru necessary to know even that?*

A: That is true. The world contains many great men. Look upon him as your Guru with whom your mind gets attuned. The one in whom you have faith is your Guru.[7]

Q: *What is the significance of Guru's grace in the attainment of liberation?*

A: Liberation is not anywhere outside you. It is only within. If a man is anxious for deliverance, the internal Guru pulls him in and the external Guru pushes him into the Self. This is the grace of the Guru.[8]

Q: *Some people reported you to have said that there was no need for a Guru. Others gave the opposite report. What does Maharshi say?*

A: I have never said that there is no need for a Guru.

Q: *Sri Aurobindo and others refer to you as having had no Guru.*

A: It all depends on what you call a Guru. He need not be in a human form. Dattatreya had twenty-four Gurus including the five elements – earth, water, etc. Every object in this world was his Guru.

The Guru is absolutely necessary. The *Upanishads* say that none but a Guru can take a man out of the jungle of intellect and sense-perceptions. So there must be a Guru.

Q: *I mean a human Guru – Maharshi did not have one.*

A: I might have had one at one time or other. But did I not sing hymns to Arunachala?[9] What is a Guru? Guru is God or the Self. First a man prays to God to fulfil his desires. A time comes when he will no more pray for the fulfilment of material desires but for God himself. God then appears to him in some form or other, human or non-human, to guide him to himself in answer to his prayer and according to his needs.[10]

Q: *When loyal to one Master can you respect others?*

A: Guru is only one. He is not physical. So long as there is weakness the support of strength is needed.

Q: *J. Krishnamurti says, 'No Guru is necessary.'*

A: How did he know it? One can say so after realising but not before.[11]

Q: *Can Sri Bhagavan help us to realise the truth?*

A: Help is always there.

Q: *Then there is no need to ask questions. I do not feel the ever-present help.*

A: Surrender and you will find it.

Q: *I am always at your feet. Will Bhagavan give us some* upadesa *[teaching] to follow? Otherwise how can I get help living 600 miles away?*

A: The *sadguru* [the Guru who is one with being] is within.

Q: Sadguru *is necessary to guide me to understand it.*

A: The *sadguru* is within.

Q: *I want a visible Guru.*

A: That visible Guru says that he is within.[12]

Q: *Is success not dependent on the Guru's grace?*

A: Yes, it is. Is not your practice itself due to such grace? The

fruits are the result of the practice and follow it automatically. There is a stanza in *Kaivalya* which says, 'O Guru! You have been always with me, watching me through several reincarnations, and ordaining my course until I was liberated.' The Self manifests externally as the Guru when the occasion arises, otherwise he is always within, doing what is necessary.[13]

Q: *Some disciples of Shirdi Sai Baba worship a picture of him and say that it is their Guru. How could that be? They can worship it as God, but what benefit could they get by worshipping it as their Guru?*

A: They secure concentration by that.

Q: *That is all very well, I agree. It may be to some extent an exercise in concentration. But isn't a Guru required for that concentration?*

A: Certainly, but after all, Guru only means *guri*, concentration.

Q: *How can a lifeless picture help in developing deep concentration? It requires a living Guru who could show it in practice. It is possible perhaps for Bhagavan to attain perfection without a living Guru, but is it possible for people like myself?*

A: That is true. Even so, by worshipping a lifeless portrait, the mind gets concentrated to a certain extent. That concentration will not remain constant unless one knows one's own Self by enquiring. For that enquiry, a Guru's help is necessary.[14]

Q: *It is said that the Guru can make his disciple realise the Self by transmitting some of his own power to him? Is it true?*

A: Yes. The Guru does not bring about Self-realisation. He simply removes the obstacles to it. The Self is always realised.

Q: *Is it absolutely necessary to have a Guru if one is seeking Self-realisation?*

A: So long as you seek Self-realisation the Guru is necessary. Guru is the Self. Take Guru to be the real Self and your self as the individual self. The disappearance of this sense of duality is the removal of ignorance. So long as duality persists in you the Guru is necessary. Because you identify yourself with the body you think that the Guru is also a body. You are not the body, nor is the Guru. You are the Self and so is the Guru. This knowledge is gained by what you call Self-realisation.

Q: *How can one know whether a particular individual is competent to be a Guru?*

A: By the peace of mind found in his presence and by the sense of respect you feel for him.

Q: *If the Guru happens to turn out incompetent, what will be the fate of the disciple who has implicit faith in him?*

A: Each one according to his merits.[15]

Q: *May I have Guru's grace?*

A: Grace is always there.

Q: *But I do not feel it.*

A: Surrender will make one understand the grace.

Q: *I have surrendered heart and soul. I am the best judge of my heart. Still I do not feel the grace.*

A: If you had surrendered the questions would not arise.

Q: *I have surrendered. Still the questions arise.*

A: Grace is constant. Your judgment is the variable. Where else should the fault lie?[16]

Q: *May one have more than one spiritual master?*

A: Who is a master? He is the Self after all. According to the stages of development of the mind the Self manifests as the master externally. The famous ancient saint Dattatreya said that he had more than twenty-four masters. The master is one from whom one learns anything. The Guru may be sometimes inanimate also, as in the case of Dattatreya. God, Guru and the Self are identical.

A spiritually-minded man thinks that God is all-pervading and takes God for his Guru. Later, God brings him in contact with a personal Guru and the man recognises him as all in all. Lastly the same man is made by the grace of the master to feel that his Self is the reality and nothing else. Thus he finds that the Self is the master.[17]

Q: *It is said in* Srimad Bhagavad Gita*: 'Realise the Self with pure intellect and also by service to the Guru and by enquiry.' How are they to be reconciled?*

A: *'Iswaro Gururatmeti' – Iswara*, Guru and Self are identical. So long as the sense of duality persists in you, you seek a Guru, thinking that he is different from you. However, he teaches you the truth and you gain the insight.[18]

He who bestows the supreme knowledge of Self upon the soul by making it face towards Self, alone is the supreme Guru who is praised by sages as the form of God, who is Self. Cling to him. By approaching the Guru and serving him faithfully one should learn through his grace the cause of one's birth and one's suffering. Knowing then that these are due to one's straying from Self, it is best to abide firmly as Self.

Although those who have embraced and are steadfastly

following the path to salvation may at times happen to swerve from the Vedic path either due to forgetfulness or due to some other reasons, know that they should not at any time go against the words of the Guru. The words of sages assure that if one does a wrong to God, it can be rectified by the Guru, but that a wrong done to a Guru cannot be rectified even by God.

For one who, due to rare, intense and abundant love, has complete faith in the glance of grace bestowed by the Guru, there will be no suffering and he will live in this world like Puruhuta [a name of Indra, the king of the gods].

Peace, the one thing which is desired by everyone, cannot be attained in any way, by anyone, at any time or in any place, unless stillness of mind is obtained through the grace of the *sadguru*. Therefore always seek that grace with a one-pointed mind.[19]

Q: *There are disciples of Bhagavan who have had his grace and realised without any considerable difficulty. I too wish to have that grace. Being a woman and living at a long distance I cannot avail myself of Maharshi's holy company as much as I would wish and as often as I would. Possibly I may not be able to return. I request Bhagavan's grace. When I am back in my place, I want to remember Bhavagan. May Bhagavan be pleased to grant my prayer.*

A: Where are you going? You are not going anywhere. Even supposing you are the body, has your body come from Lucknow to Tiruvannamalai? You simply sat in the car and one conveyance or another moved. And finally you say that you have come here. The fact is that you are not the body. The Self does not move, the world moves in it. You are only what you are. There is no change in you. So then, even after what looks like departure from here, you are here and there and everywhere. These scenes shift.

As for grace, grace is within you. If it is external it is useless. Grace is the Self. You are never out of its operation. Grace is always there.

Q: *I mean that when I remember your form, my mind should be strengthened and a response should come from your side too. I should not be left to my individual efforts which are after all only weak.*

A: Grace is the Self. I have already said, if you remember Bhagavan, you are prompted to do so by the Self. Is not grace already there? Is there a moment when grace is not operating in you? Your remembrance is the forerunner of grace. That is the response, that is the stimulus, that is the Self and that is grace.

There is no cause for anxiety.[20]

Q: *Can I dispense with outside help and by my own effort get to the deeper truth by myself?*

A: The very fact that you are possessed of the quest for the Self is a manifestation of the divine grace. It is effulgent in the Heart, the inner being, the real Self. It draws you from within. You have to attempt to get in from outside. Your attempt is the earnest quest, the deep inner movement is grace. That is why I say there is no real quest without grace, nor is there grace active for him who does not seek the Self. Both are necessary.[21]

Q: *How long is a Guru necessary for Self-realisation?*

A: Guru is necessary so long as there is ignorance. Ignorance is due to the self-imposed but wrong limitation of the Self. God, on being worshipped, bestows steadiness in devotion which leads to surrender. On the devotee surrendering, God shows his mercy by manifesting as the Guru. The Guru, otherwise God, guides the devotee, saying that God is within and that he is not different from the Self. This leads to introversion of mind and finally to realisation.

Q: *If grace is so important, what is the role of individual effort?*

A: Effort is necessary up to the state of realisation. Even then the Self should spontaneously become evident, otherwise happiness will not be complete. Up to that state of spontaneity there must be effort in some form or another.[22]

There is a state beyond our efforts or effortlessness. Until it is realised effort is necessary. After tasting such bliss, even once, one will repeatedly try to regain it. Having once experienced the bliss of peace no one wants to be out of it or to engage in any other activity.[23]

Q: *Is divine grace necessary for attaining realisation, or can an individual's honest efforts by themselves lead to the state from which there is no return to life and death?*

A: Divine grace is essential for realisation. It leads one to God realisation. But such grace is vouchsafed only to him who is a true devotee or a yogi. It is given only to those who have striven hard and ceaselessly on the path towards freedom.[24]

Q: *Does distance have any effect upon grace?*

A: Time and space are within us. You are always in your Self. How do time and space affect it?

Q: *On the radio those who are nearer hear sooner. You are Hindu, we are American. Does it make any difference?*

A: No.

Q: *Even thoughts are read by others.*

A: That shows that all are one.[25]

Q: *Does Bhagavan feel for us and show grace?*

A: You are neck-deep in water and yet cry for water. It is as good as saying that one neck-deep in water feels thirsty, or that a fish in water feels thirsty, or that water feels thirsty.[26]

Grace is always there. 'Dispassion cannot be acquired, nor realisation of the truth, nor inherence in the Self, in the absence of Guru's grace'.

But practice is also necessary. Staying in the Self by one's efforts is like training a roguish bull confined to his stall by tempting him with luscious grass and preventing him from straying.[27]

Q: *I have recently come across a Tamil song in which the author laments he is not like the tenacious young monkey that can hold on to its mother tightly, but rather like a puling kitten that must be carried by the neck in its mother's jaws. The author therefore prays to God to take care of him. My case is exactly the same. You must take pity on me Bhagavan. Hold me by the neck and see that I don't fall and get injured.*

A: That is impossible. It is necessary both for you to strive and for the Guru to help.[28]

Q: *How long will it take for one to get the grace of the Guru?*

A: Why do you desire to know?

Q: *To give me hope.*

A: Even such a desire is an obstacle. The Self is ever there, there is nothing without it. Be the Self and the desires and doubts will disappear.[29]

Grace is the beginning, middle and end. Grace is the Self. Because of the false identification of the Self with the body the Guru is considered to be a body. But from the Guru's outlook the Guru is only the Self. The Self is one only and the Guru tells you that the Self alone is. Is not then the Self your Guru? Where else will grace come from? It is from the Self alone. Manifestation of the Self is a manifestation of grace and vice versa. All these doubts arise because of the wrong outlook and consequent expectation of things external to oneself. Nothing is external to the Self.[30]

CHAPTER 9
Silence and sat-sanga

Although Sri Ramana was happy to give his verbal teachings to anyone who asked for them, he frequently pointed out that his 'silent teachings' were more direct and more powerful. These 'silent teachings' consisted of a spiritual force which seemed to emanate from his form, a force so powerful that he considered it to be the most direct and important aspect of his teachings. Instead of giving out verbal instructions on how to control the mind, he effortlessly emitted a silent power which automatically quietened the minds of everyone in his vicinity. The people who were attuned to this force report that they experienced it as a state of inner peace and well-being; in some advanced devotees it even precipitated a direct experience of the Self.

This method of teaching has a long tradition in India, its most famous exponent being Dakshinamurti, a manifestation of Siva who brought four learned sages to an experience of the Self through the power of his silence. Sri Ramana frequently spoke of Dakshinamurti with great approval and his name crops up in many of the conversations in this chapter.

This flow of power from the Guru can be received by anyone whose attention is focused on the Self or on the form of the Guru; distance is no impediment to its efficacy. This attention is often called *sat-sanga*, which literally means 'association with being'. Sri Ramana wholeheartedly encouraged this practice and frequently said that it was the most efficient way of bringing about a direct experience of the Self. Traditionally it involves being in the physical presence of one who has realised the Self, but Sri Ramana gave it a much wider definition. He said that the most important element in *sat-sanga* was the mental connection with the Guru; *sat-sanga* takes place not only in his presence but whenever and wherever one thinks of him.

The following quotation gives an indication of the power of *sat-sanga*. It consists of five stray Sanskrit verses which Sri Ramana came across at various times. He was so impressed by

their contents that he translated them into Tamil and incorporated them in *Ulladu Narpadu Anubandham*, one of his own written works which deals with the nature of reality.

1 By *sat-sanga* the association with the objects of the world will be removed. When that worldly association is removed the attachment or tendencies of the mind will be destroyed. Those who are devoid of mental attachment will perish in that which is motionless. Thus they attain *jivan mukti* [liberation]. Cherish their association.
2 The supreme state which is praised and which is attained here in this life by clear *vichara*, which arises in the Heart when association with a *sadhu* [a noble person, or one who has realised the Self] is gained, is impossible to attain by listening to preachers, by studying and learning the meaning of the scriptures, by virtuous deeds or by any other means.
3 If one gains association with *sadhus*, of what use are all the religious observances [*niyamas*]? When the excellent cool southern breeze itself is blowing, what is the use of holding a hand-fan?
4 Heat will be removed by the cool moon, poverty by the celestial wish-fulfilling tree and sin by the Ganges. But know that all these, beginning with heat, will be removed merely by having the *darshan* [sight] of incomparable *sadhus*.
5 Sacred bathing places, which are composed of water, and images of deities, which are made of stone and earth, cannot be comparable to those great souls [*mahatmas*]. Ah, what a wonder! The bathing places and deities bestow purity of mind after countless days, whereas such purity is instantly bestowed upon people as soon as *sadhus* see them with their eyes.[1]

Q: *Why does not Bhagavan go about and preach the truth to the people at large?*

A: How do you know I am not doing it? Does preaching consist in mounting a platform and haranguing the people around? Preaching is simple communication of knowledge; it can really be done in silence only. What do you think of a man who

listens to a sermon for an hour and goes away without having been impressed by it so as to change his life? Compare him with another, who sits in a holy presence and goes away after some time with his outlook on life totally changed. Which is the better, to preach loudly without effect or to sit silently sending out inner force?

Again, how does speech arise? First there is abstract knowledge. Out of this arises the ego, which in turn gives rise to thought, and thought to the spoken word. So the word is the great-grandson of the original source. If the word can produce an effect, judge for yourself, how much more powerful must be the preaching through silence.[2]

Q: *How can silence be so powerful?*

A: A realised one sends out waves of spiritual influence which draw many people towards him. Yet he may sit in a cave and maintain complete silence. We may listen to lectures upon truth and come away with hardly any grasp of the subject, but to come into contact with a realised one, though he speaks nothing, will give much more grasp of the subject. He never needs to go out among the public. If necessary he can use others as instruments.[3]

The Guru is the bestower of silence who reveals the light of Self-knowledge which shines as the residual reality. Spoken words are of no use whatsoever if the eyes of the Guru meet the eyes of the disciple.[4]

Q: *Does Bhagavan give* diksha *[initiation]?*

A: *Mouna* [silence] is the best and the most potent *diksha*. That was practised by Sri Dakshinamurti. Initiation by touch, look, etc., are all of a lower order. Silent initiation changes the hearts of all.[5]

Dakshinamurti observed silence when the disciples approached him. That is the highest form of initiation. It includes the other forms. There must be subject–object relationship established in the other *dikshas*. First the subject must emanate and then the object. Unless these two are there how is the one to look at the other or touch him? *Mouna diksha* is the most perfect; it comprises looking, touching and teaching. It will purify the individual in every way and establish him in the reality.[6]

Q: *Swami Vivekananda says that a spiritual Guru can transfer spirituality substantially to the disciple.*

A: Is there a substance to be transferred? Transfer means eradication of the sense of being the disciple. The master does it.

Not that the man was something at one time and metamorphosed later into another.

Q: *Is not grace the gift of the Guru?*

A: God, grace and Guru are all synonymous and also eternal and immanent. Is not the Self already within? Is it for the Guru to bestow it by his look? If a Guru thinks so, he does not deserve the name.

The books say that there are so many kinds of *diksha*, initiation by hand, by touch, by eye, etc. They also say that the Guru makes some rites with fire, water, *japa* or *mantras* and calls such fantastic performances *dikshas*, as if the disciple becomes ripe only after such processes are gone through by the Guru.

If the individual is sought he is nowhere to be found. Such is the Guru. Such is Dakshinamurti. What did he do? He was silent when the disciples appeared before him. He maintained silence and the doubts of the disciples were dispelled, which means that they lost their individual identities. That is *jnana* and not all the verbiage usually associated with it.

Silence is the most potent form of work. However vast and emphatic the *sastras* may be they fail in their effect. The Guru is quiet and peace prevails in all. His silence is more vast and more emphatic than all the *sastras* put together. These questions arise because of the feeling that, having been here so long, heard so much, exerted so hard, one has not gained anything. The work proceeding within is not apparent. In fact the Guru is always within you.[7]

Q: *Can the Guru's silence really bring about advanced states of spiritual awareness?*

A: There is an old story which demonstrates the power of the Guru's silence. Tattvaraya composed a *bharani*, a kind of poetic composition in Tamil, in honour of his Guru Swarupananda, and convened an assembly of learned pandits to hear the work and assess its value. The pandits raised the objection that a *bharani* was only composed in honour of great heroes capable of killing a thousand elephants in battle and that it was not in order to compose such a work in honour of an ascetic. Thereupon the author said, 'Let us all go to my Guru and we shall have this matter settled there.' They went to the Guru and, after they had all taken their seats, the author told his Guru the purpose of their visit. The Guru sat silent and all the others also remained in *mouna*. The whole day passed, the night came, and some more

days and nights, and yet all sat there silently, no thought at all occurring to any of them and nobody thinking or asking why they had come there. After three or four days like this, the Guru moved his mind a bit, and the people assembled immediately regained their thought activity. They then declared, 'Conquering a thousand elephants is nothing beside this Guru's power to conquer the rutting elephants of all our egos put together. So certainly he deserves the *bharani* in his honour!'[8]

Q: *How does this silent power work?*

A: Language is only a medium for communicating one's thoughts to another. It is called in only after thoughts arise. Other thoughts arise after the 'I'-thought rises and so the 'I'-thought is the root of all conversation. When one remains without thinking one understands another by means of the universal language of silence.

Silence is ever-speaking. It is a perennial flow of language which is interrupted by speaking. These words I am speaking obstruct that mute language. For example, there is electricity flowing in a wire. With resistance to its passage, it glows as a lamp or revolves as a fan. In the wire it remains as electric energy. Similarly also, silence is the eternal flow of language, obstructed by words.

What one fails to know by conversation extending to several years can be known instantly in silence, or in front of silence – Dakshinamurti and his four disciples are a good example of this. This is the highest and most effective language.[9]

Q: *Bhagavan says, 'The influence of the* jnani *steals into the devotee in silence.' Bhagavan also says, 'Contact with great men [*mahatmas*] is one efficacious means of realising one's true being.'*

A: Yes. What is the contradiction? *Jnani*, great men, *mahatmas* – do you differentiate between them?

Q: *No.*

A: Contact with them is good. They will work through silence. By speaking their power is reduced. Silence is most powerful. Speech is always less powerful than silence, so mental contact is the best.

Q: *Does this hold good even after the dissolution of the physical body of the* jnani *or is it true only so long as he is in flesh and blood?*

A: Guru is not the physical form. So the contact will remain even after the physical form of the Guru vanishes. One can go to

another Guru after one's Guru passes away, but all Gurus are one and none of them is the form you see. Always mental contact is the best.[10]

Q: *Is the operation of grace the mind of the Guru acting on the mind of the disciple or is it a different process?*

A: The highest form of grace is silence. It is also the highest *upadesa* [teaching].

Q: *Vivekananda has also said that silence is the loudest form of prayer.*

A: It is so for the seeker's silence. The Guru's silence is the loudest *upadesa*. It is also grace in its highest form. All other *dikshas* [initiations] are derived from *mouna*, and are therefore secondary. *Mouna* is the primary form. If the Guru is silent the seeker's mind gets purified by itself.[11]

Q: *Sri Bhagavan's silence is itself a powerful force. It brings about a certain peace of mind in us.*

A: Silence is never-ending speech. Vocal speech obstructs the other speech of silence. In silence one is in intimate contact with the surroundings. The silence of Dakshinamurti removed the doubts of the four sages. *Mouna vyakhya prakatita tattvam* means the truth expounded by silence. Silence is said to be exposition. Silence is so potent.

For vocal speech, organs of speech are necessary and they precede speech. But the other speech lies even beyond thought. It is in short transcendent speech or unspoken words [*para vak*].[12]

Q: *Can everyone benefit from this silence?*

A: Silence is the true *upadesa*. It is the perfect *upadesa*. It is suited only for the most advanced seeker. The others are unable to draw full inspiration from it. Therefore they require words to explain the truth. But truth is beyond words. It does not admit of explanation. All that it is possible to do is to indicate it.[13]

Q: *It is said that one look of a* mahatma *is enough, that idols, pilgrimages, etc., are not so effective. I have been here for three months, but I do not know how I have been benefited by the look of Maharshi.*

A: The look has a purifying effect. Purification cannot be visualised. Just as a piece of coal takes a long time to be ignited, a piece of charcoal takes a shorter time, and a mass of gunpowder is instantaneously ignited, so it is with grades of men coming into contact with *mahatmas*.[14] The fire of wisdom consumes all actions. Wisdom is acquired by association with the wise [*sat-sanga*] or rather its mental atmosphere.[15]

Q: *Can the Guru's silence bring about realisation if the disciple makes no effort?*

A: In the proximity of a great master, the *vasanas* cease to be active, the mind becomes still and *samadhi* results. Thus the disciple gains true knowledge and right experience in the presence of the master. To remain unshaken in it further efforts are necessary. Eventually the disciple will know it to be his real being and will thus be liberated even while alive.[16]

Q: *If the search has to be made within, is it necessary to be in the physical proximity of the Master?*

A: It is necessary to be so until all doubts are at an end.[17]

Q: *I am not able to concentrate by myself. I am in search of a force to help me.*

A: Yes, that is called grace. Individually we are incapable because the mind is weak. Grace is necessary. *Sadhu seva* [serving a *sadhu*] will bring it about. There is however nothing new to get. Just as a weak man comes under the control of a stronger one, the weak mind of a man comes under control easily in the presence of strong-minded *sadhus*. That which is is only grace; there is nothing else.[18]

Q: *Is it necessary to serve the Guru physically?*

A: The *sastras* say that one must serve a Guru for twelve years in order to attain Self-realisation. What does the Guru do? Does he hand it over to the disciple? Is not the Self always realised? What does the common belief mean then? Man is always the Self and yet he does not know it. Instead he confounds it with the non-Self, the body, etc. Such confusion is due to ignorance. If ignorance is wiped out the confusion will cease to exist and the true knowledge will be unfolded. By remaining in contact with realised sages the man gradually loses the ignorance until its removal is complete. The eternal Self is thus revealed.[19]

Q: *You say that association with the wise* [sat-sanga] *and service of them is required of the disciple.*

A: Yes, the first really means association with the unmanifest *sat* or absolute existence, but as very few can do that, they have to take second best which is association with the manifest *sat*, that is, the Guru. Association with sages should be made because thoughts are so persistent. The sage has already overcome the mind and remains in peace. Being in his proximity helps to bring about this condition in others, otherwise there is no meaning in

seeking his company. The Guru provides the needed strength for this, unseen by others. Service is primarily to abide in the Self, but it also includes making the Guru's body comfortable and looking after his place of abode. Contact with the Guru is also necessary, but this means spiritual contact. If the disciple finds the Guru internally, then it does not matter where he goes. Staying here or elsewhere must be understood to be the same and to have the same effect.[20]

Q: *My profession requires me to stay near my place of work. I cannot remain in the vicinity of* sadhus. *Can I have realisation even in the absence of* sat-sanga?

A: *Sat* is *aham pratyaya saram*, the Self of selves. The *sadhu* is that Self of selves. He is immanent in all. Can anyone remain without the Self? No. So no one is away from *sat-sanga.*[21]

Q: *Is proximity to the Guru helpful?*

A: Do you mean physical proximity? What is the good of it? The mind alone matters. The mind must be contacted.[22] *Sat-sanga* will make the mind sink into the Heart.

Such association is both mental and physical. The extremely visible being of the Guru pushes the mind inward. He is also in the Heart of the seeker and so he draws the latter's inward-bent mind into the Heart.[23]

Q: *All that I want to know is whether* sat-sanga *is necessary and whether my coming here will help me or not.*

A: First you must decide what is *sat-sanga.* It means association with *sat* or reality. One who knows or has realised *sat* is also regarded as *sat.* Such association with *sat* or with one who knows *sat* is absolutely necessary for all. Sankara has said that in all the three worlds there is no boat like *sat-sanga* to carry one safely across the ocean of births and deaths.[24]

Sat-sanga means *sanga* [association] with *sat. Sat* is only the Self. Since the Self is not now understood to be *sat*, the company of the sage who has thus understood it is sought. That is *sat-sanga.* Introversion results. Then *sat* is revealed.[25]

PART FOUR

Meditation and yoga

The best meditation is that which continues in all the three states. It must be so intense that it does not give room even to the thought 'I am meditating'.[1]

Having made the liking to see through the deceitful senses subside, and having thereby ended the objective knowing of the mind, the jumping ego, to know the lightless light and the soundless sound in the Heart is the true power of yoga [*yoga-sakti*].[2]

CHAPTER 10
Meditation and concentration

Sri Ramana's insistence that awareness of the 'I'-thought was a prerequisite for Self-realisation led him to the conclusion that all spiritual practices which did not incorporate this feature were indirect and inefficient:

> This path [attention to the 'I'] is the direct path; all others are indirect ways. The first leads to the Self, the others elsewhere. And even if the latter do arrive at the Self it is only because they lead at the end to the first path which ultimately carries them to the goal. So, in the end, the aspirants must adopt the first path. Why not do so now? Why waste time?[1]

That is to say, other techniques may sometimes bring one to an inner state of stillness in which self-attention or self-awareness inadvertently takes place, but it is a very roundabout way of reaching the Self. Sri Ramana maintained that other techniques could only take one to the place where self-enquiry starts and so he never endorsed them unless he felt that particular questioners were unable or unwilling to adopt self-enquiry. This is illustrated by a conversation in *Sri Ramana Gita* (an early collection of his questions and answers) in which Sri Ramana explained in detail why self-enquiry was the only way to realise the Self. After listening carefully to Sri Ramana's explanation the questioner was still unwilling to accept that self-enquiry was the only route to the Self and so he asked if there were any other methods by which the Self could be realised. Sri Ramana replied:

> The goal is the same for the one who meditates [on an object] and the one who practises self-enquiry. One attains stillness through meditation, the other through knowledge. One strives to attain something; the other seeks the one who strives to attain. The former takes a longer time, but in the end attains the Self.[2]

Not wanting to shake the faith of a man who had a known predilection for subject-object meditation and, having already ascertained that he was unwilling to take up self-enquiry, Sri Ramana encouraged him to follow his own chosen method by telling him that it would enable him to reach the Self. In Sri Ramana's view any method is better than no method since there is always the possibility that it will lead to self-enquiry.

He gave many other similar replies to other people for similar reasons. These replies, which indicate that methods other than self-enquiry or surrender could result in Self-realisation, should not be taken at face value since they were only given to people who were not attracted to self-enquiry and who wanted to follow their own methods. When he spoke to other devotees who were not attached to what he called 'indirect methods', he would usually reaffirm that self-attention was ultimately indispensable.

Although Sri Ramana vigorously defended his views on self-enquiry he never insisted that anyone change their beliefs or practices and, if he was unable to convince his followers to take up self-enquiry, he would happily give advice on other methods. In the conversations in this chapter he is mostly answering questions from devotees who wanted advice on conventional forms of meditation (*dhyana*). In giving this advice he usually defined meditation as concentration on one thought to the exclusion of all others, but he sometimes gave it a higher definition by saying that keeping the mind fixed in the Self was true meditation. This latter practice is really another name for self-enquiry, for, as he explained in one of his early written works, 'Always keeping the mind fixed in Self alone is called self-enquiry, whereas meditation is thinking oneself to be *Brahman*.'[3]

Q: *What is the difference between meditation* [dhyana] *and investigation* [vichara]*?*

A: Both amount to the same. Those unfit for investigation must practise meditation. In meditation the aspirant forgetting himself meditates 'I am *Brahman*' or 'I am Siva' and by this method holds on to *Brahman* or Siva. This will ultimately end with the residual awareness of *Brahman* or Siva as being. He will then realise that this is pure being, that is, the Self.

He who engages in investigation starts by holding on to himself, and by asking himself 'Who am I?' the Self becomes clear to him.[4]

Mentally imagining oneself to be the supreme reality, which shines as existence-consciousness-bliss, is meditation. Fixing the mind in the Self so that the unreal seed of delusion will die is enquiry.

Whoever meditates upon the Self in whatever *bhava* [mental image] attains it only in that image. Those peaceful ones who remain quiet without any such *bhava* attain the noble and unqualified state of *kaivalya*, the formless state of the Self.[5]

Q: *Meditation is more direct than investigation because the former holds on to the truth whereas the latter sifts the truth from the untruth.*

A: For the beginner meditation on a form is more easy and agreeable. Practice of it leads to self-enquiry which consists in sifting the reality from unreality.

What is the use of holding on to truth when you are filled with antagonistic factors?

Self-enquiry directly leads to realisation by removing the obstacles which make you think that the Self is not already realised.[6]

Meditation differs according to the degree of advancement of the seeker. If one is fit for it one might directly hold on to the thinker, and the thinker will then automatically sink into his source, pure consciousness.

If one cannot directly hold on to the thinker one must meditate on God and in due course the same individual will have become sufficiently pure to hold on to the thinker and to sink into absolute being.[7]

Meditation is possible only if the ego is kept up. There is the ego and the object meditated upon. The method is therefore indirect because the Self is only one. Seeking the ego, that is its source, the ego disappears. What is left over is the Self. This method is the direct one.[8]

Q: *There is no way found to go inward by means of meditation.*

A: Where else are we now? Our very being is that.

Q: *Being so, we are ignorant of it.*

A: Ignorant of what, and whose is the ignorance? If ignorant of the Self are there two selves?

Q: *There are not two selves. The feeling of limitation cannot*

be denied. Due to limitations. . . .

A: Limitation is only in the mind. Did you feel it in deep sleep? You exist in sleep. You do not deny your existence then. The same Self is here and now in the wakeful state. You are now saying that there are limitations. What has now happened is that there are these differences between the two states. The differences are due to the mind. There was no mind in sleep whereas it is now active. The Self exists in the absence of the mind also.

Q: *Although it is understood, it is not realised.*

A: It will be by and by, with meditation.

Q: *Meditation is with mind. How can it kill the mind in order to reveal the Self?*

A: Meditation is sticking to one thought. That single thought keeps away other thoughts. Distraction of mind is a sign of its weakness. By constant meditation it gains strength, that is to say, the weakness of fugitive thought gives place to the enduring background free from thought. This expanse devoid of thought is the Self. Mind in purity is the Self.[9]

Q: *What is* dhyana *[meditation]?*

A: It is abiding as one's Self without swerving in any way from one's real nature and without feeling that one is meditating.

Q: *What is the difference between* dhyana *and* samadhi?

A: *Dhyana* is achieved through deliberate mental effort. In *samadhi* there is no such effort.

Q: *What are the factors to be kept in view in* dhyana?

A: It is important for one who is established in his Self [*atmanishtha*] to see that he does not swerve in the least from this absorption. By swerving from his true nature he may see before him bright effulgences, or hear unusual sounds, or regard as real the visions of gods appearing within or outside himself. He should not be deceived by these and forget himself.[10]

Q: *How is meditation to be practised?*

A: Meditation is, truly speaking, *atmanishtha* [to be fixed as the Self]. But when thoughts cross the mind and an effort is made to eliminate them the effort is usually termed meditation. *Atmanishtha* is your real nature. Remain as you are. That is the aim.

Q: *But thoughts come up. Is our effort meant to eliminate thoughts only?*

A: Yes. Meditation being on a single thought, the other thoughts are kept away. Meditation is only negative in effect in as much as thoughts are kept away.

Q: *It is said* 'atma samstham manah krtva' *[fixing the mind in the Self]. But the Self is unthinkable.*

A: Why do you wish to meditate at all? Because you wish to do so you are told '*atma samstham manah krtva*'. Why do you not remain as you are without meditating? What is that '*manah*' [mind]? When all thoughts are eliminated it becomes '*atma samstha*' [fixed in the Self].

Q: *If a form is given I can meditate on it and other thoughts are eliminated. But the Self is formless.*

A: Meditation on forms or concrete objects is said to be *dhyana*, whereas the enquiry into the Self is *vichara* [enquiry] or *nididhyasana* [uninterrupted awareness of being].[11]

Q: *There is more pleasure in* dhyana *than in sensual enjoyments. Yet the mind runs after the latter and does not seek the former. Why is it so?*

A: Pleasure or pain are aspects of the mind only. Our essential nature is happiness. But we have forgotten the Self and imagine that the body or the mind is the Self. It is that wrong identity that gives rise to misery. What is to be done? This mental tendency is very ancient and has continued for innumerable past births. Hence it has grown strong. That must go before the essential nature, happiness, asserts itself.[12]

Q: *How is* dhyana *practised – with eyes open or closed?*

A: It may be done either way. The point is that the mind must be introverted and kept active in its pursuit. Sometimes it happens that when the eyes are closed the latent thoughts rush forth with great vigour. It may also be difficult to introvert the mind with the eyes open. It requires strength of mind to do so. The mind is contaminated when it takes in objects. Otherwise, it is pure. The main factor in *dhyana* is to keep the mind active in its own pursuit without taking in external impressions or thinking of other matters.[13]

Q: *Bhagavan, whenever I meditate, I feel great heat in the head and, if I persist, my whole body burns. What is the remedy?*

A: If concentration is made with the brain, sensations of heat and even headache ensue. Concentration has to be made in the Heart, which is cool and refreshing. Relax and your meditation will be easy. Keep your mind steady by gently warding off all intruding thoughts but without strain. Soon you will succeed.[14]

Q: *How do I prevent myself falling asleep in meditation?*

A: If you try to prevent sleep it will mean thinking in meditation, which must be avoided. But if you slip into sleep while meditating, the meditation will continue even during and after sleep. Yet, being a thought, sleep must be got rid of, for the final natural state has to be obtained consciously in *jagrat* [the waking state] without the disturbing thought. Waking and sleeping are mere pictures on the screen of the native, thought-free state. Let them pass unnoticed.[15]

Q: *What is to be meditated upon?*

A: Anything that you prefer.

Q: *Siva, Vishnu and* gayatri *are said to be equally efficacious. Which should I meditate upon?*

A: Any one you like best. They are all equal in their effect. But you should stick to one.

Q: *How do I meditate?*

A: Concentrate on that one whom you like best. If a single thought prevails, all other thoughts are put off and finally eradicated. So long as diversity prevails there are bad thoughts. When the object of love prevails only good thoughts hold the field. Therefore hold on to one thought only. *Dhyana* is the chief practice.

Dhyana means fight. As soon as you begin meditation other thoughts will crowd together, gather force and try to sink the single thought to which you try to hold. The good thought must gradually gain strength by repeated practice. After it has grown strong the other thoughts will be put to flight. This is the battle royal always taking place in meditation.

One wants to rid oneself of misery. It requires peace of mind, which means absence of perturbation owing to all kinds of thoughts. Peace of mind is brought about by *dhyana* alone.[16]

Q: *Since Sri Bhagavan says that the Self may function at any of the centres or* chakras *while its seat is in the Heart, is it not possible that by the practice of intense concentration or* dhyana *between the eyebrows this centre may become the seat of the Self?*

A: Any consideration about the seat of the Self is theoretical if you fix your attention on a place in the body. You consider yourself as the subject, the seer, and the place where you fix your attention becomes the object seen. This is merely *bhavana* [mental imagery]. When, on the contrary, you see the seer himself, you merge in the Self and you become one with it. That is the Heart.

Q: *Is the practice of concentration between the eyebrows advisable?*

A: The final result of the practice of any kind of *dhyana* is that the object on which the seeker fixes his mind ceases to exist as distinct and separate from the subject. They, the subject and object, become the one Self, and that is the Heart.

Q: *Why does not Sri Bhagavan direct us to practise concentration on some particular centre or* chakra?

A: *Yoga Sastra* says that the *sahasrara* [the *chakra* located in the brain] or the brain is the seat of the Self. *Purusha Sukta* declares that the Heart is its seat. To enable the *sadhaka* to steer clear of possible doubt, I tell him to take up the thread or the clue of 'I'-ness or 'I am'-ness and follow it up to its source. Because, firstly, it is impossible for anybody to entertain any doubt about this 'I' notion. Secondly, whatever be the means adopted, the final goal is the realisation of the source of 'I am'-ness which is the primary datum of your experience.

If you therefore practise self-enquiry, you will reach the Heart which is the Self.[17]

Q: *I practise* hatha *yoga and I also meditate 'I am* Brahman'. *After a few moments of this meditation, a blank prevails, the brain gets heated and a fear of death arises. What should I do?*

A: 'I am *Brahman*' is only a thought. Who says it? *Brahman* itself does not say so. What need is there for it to say it? Nor can the real 'I' say so. For 'I' always abides as *Brahman*. To be saying it is only a thought. Whose thought is it? All thoughts are from the unreal 'I', that is the 'I'-thought. Remain without thinking. So long as there is thought there will be fear.

Q: *As I go on thinking of it there is forgetfulness, the brain becomes heated and I am afraid.*

A: Yes, the mind is concentrated in the brain and hence you get a hot sensation there. It is because of the 'I'-thought. When the 'I'-thought arises fear of death arises simultaneously. With regard to forgetfulness, so long as there is thought there will be forgetfulness. First there is the thought 'I am *Brahman*', then forgetfulness supervenes. Forgetfulness and thought are for the 'I'-thought only. Hold on to it and it will disappear like a phantom. What remains over is the real 'I' and that is the Self.

'I am *Brahman*' is an aid to concentration since it keeps off other thoughts. When that one thought alone persists, see whose thought it is. It will be found to be from 'I'. From where is the 'I'-

thought? Probe into it, the 'I'-thought will vanish, and the supreme Self will shine forth of itself. No further effort is needed.

When the one real 'I' remains alone, it will not be saying 'I am *Brahman*'. Does a man go on repeating 'I am a man'? Unless he is challenged, why should he declare himself a man? Does anyone mistake himself for an animal that he should say, 'No, I am not an animal, I am a man'? Similarly, *Brahman* or 'I' being the only existing reality, there is no one there to challenge it and so there is no need to be repeating 'I am *Brahman*'.[18]

Q: *Why should one adopt this self-hypnotism by thinking on the unthinkable point? Why not adopt other methods like gazing into light, holding the breath, hearing music, hearing internal sounds, repetition of the sacred syllable* om *or other* mantras*?*

A: Light-gazing stupefies the mind and produces catalepsy of the will for the time being, but it secures no permanent benefit. Breath control temporarily benumbs the will but it is not permanent. It is the same with listening to sounds, unless the *mantra* is sacred and secures the help of a higher power to purify and raise the thoughts.[19]

Q: *We are advised to concentrate on the spot in the forehead between the eyebrows. Is this right?*

A: Everyone is aware – 'I am'. Leaving aside that awareness one goes about in search of God. What is the use of fixing one's attention between the eyebrows? It is mere folly to say that God is between the eyebrows. The aim of such advice is to help the mind to concentrate. It is one of the forcible methods to check the mind and prevent its dissipation. It is forcibly directed into one channel. It is a help to concentration.

But the best means of realisation is the enquiry 'Who am I?' The present trouble is to the mind and it must be removed by the mind only.[20]

Q: *I do not always concentrate on the same centre in the body. Sometimes I find it easier to concentrate on one centre and sometimes on another. And sometimes when I concentrate on one centre the thought of its own accord goes and fixes itself in another. Why is that?*

A: It may be because of past practices of yours. But in any case it is immaterial on which centre you concentrate since the real Heart is in every centre and even outside the body. On whatever part of the body you may concentrate or on whatever external object, the Heart is there.

Q: *Can one concentrate at one time on one centre and at another time on another or should one concentrate always consistently on the same centre?*

A: As I have just said, there can be no harm wherever you concentrate, because concentration is only a means of giving up thoughts. Whatever the centre or object on which you concentrate, he who concentrates is always the same.[21]

Q: *Some say that one should practise meditation on gross objects only. It may be disastrous if one constantly seeks to kill the mind.*

A: For whom is it disastrous? Can there be disaster apart from the Self?

Unbroken 'I, I' is the infinite ocean. The ego, the 'I'-thought, remains only a bubble on it and is called *jiva* or individual soul. The bubble too is water for when it bursts it only mixes in the ocean. When it remains a bubble it is still a part of the ocean. Ignorant of this simple truth, innumerable methods under different denominations, such as yoga, *bhakti*, *karma*, each again with many modifications, are being taught with great skill and in intricate detail only to entice the seekers and confuse their minds. So also are the religions and sects and dogmas. What are they all for? Only for knowing the Self. They are aids and practices required for knowing the Self.

Objects perceived by the senses are spoken of as immediate knowledge [*pratyaksha*]. Can anything be as direct as the Self – always experienced without the aid of the senses? Sense-perceptions can only be indirect knowledge, and not direct knowledge. Only one's own awareness is direct knowledge, and that is the common experience of one and all. No aids are needed to know one's own Self.[22]

CHAPTER 11
Mantras *and* japa

A *mantra* is a word or phrase which has been given to a disciple by a Guru, usually as part of an initiation rite. If the Guru has accumulated spiritual power as a result of his realisation or meditation, some of this power is transmitted in the *mantra*. If the disciple repeats the word continuously, the power of the Guru is invoked in such a way that it helps the disciple to progress towards the goal of Self-realisation. Sri Ramana accepted the validity of this approach but he very rarely gave out *mantras* himself and he never used them as part of an initiation ceremony. He did, on the other hand, speak highly of the practice of *nama-japa* (the continuous repetition of God's name) and he often advocated it as a useful aid for those who were following the path of surrender.

In chapter 7 it was pointed out that surrender to God or the Self could be effectively practised by being aware at all times that there is no individual 'I' acting and thinking, only a 'higher power' which is responsible for all the activities of the world. Sri Ramana recommended *japa* as an effective way of cultivating this attitude since it replaces an awareness of the individual and the world with a constant awareness of this higher power.

In its early stages the repetition of the name of God is only an exercise in concentration and meditation, but with continued practice a stage is reached in which the repetition proceeds effortlessly, automatically and continuously. This stage is not reached by concentration alone but only by completely surrendering to the deity whose name is being repeated: 'To use the name of God one must call upon him with yearning and unreservedly surrender oneself to him. Only after such surrender is the name of God constantly with the man.'[1]

When Sri Ramana talked about this advanced stage of *japa* there was an almost mystical dimension to his ideas. He would speak of the identity of the name of God with the Self and sometimes he would even say that when the Self is realised the

name of God repeats itself effortlessly and continuously in the Heart.

This ultimate stage is only reached after the practice of *japa* merges into the practice of self-attention. Sri Ramana usually illustrated the necessity of this transition by quoting from the words of Namdev, a fourteenth-century Maharashtra saint: 'The all-pervading nature of the Name can only be understood when one recognises one's own 'I'. When one's own name is not recognised, it is impossible to get the all-pervading Name.'[2] This quotation comes from a short work by Namdev entitled *The Philosophy of the Divine Name* and the full text is given in one of Sri Ramana's answers later in the chapter. He first discovered it in 1937 and for the last thirteen years of his life he kept a copy of it on a small bookshelf by his bed. He frequently read it out when visitors asked him about the nature and usefulness of *japa* and from the number of times he spoke of it with approval it is reasonable to assume that he fully endorsed its contents.

Q: *My practice has been a continuous* japa *of the names of God with the incoming breath and the name of Sai Baba with the outgoing breath. Simultaneously with this I see the form of Baba always. Even in Bhagavan, I see Baba. Now, should I continue this or change the method, as something from within says that if I stick to the name and form I shall never go above name and form? But I can't understand what further to do after giving up name and form. Will Bhagavan enlighten me on this point?*

A: You may continue in your present method. When the *japa* becomes continuous, all other thoughts cease and one is in one's real nature, which is *japa* or *dhyana*. We turn our mind outwards on things of the world and are therefore not aware of our real nature being always *japa*. When by conscious effort of *japa* or *dhyana*, as we call it, we prevent our mind from thinking of other things, then what remains is our real nature, which is *japa*.

So long as you think you are name and form, you can't escape name and form in *japa* also. When you realise you are not name and form, then name and form will drop of themselves. No other effort is necessary. *Japa* or *dhyana* will naturally and as a matter of course lead to it. What is now regarded as the means, *japa*, will then be found to be the goal. Name and God are not different. This is clearly shown in the teachings of Namdev.[3]

1 The Name permeates densely the sky and the lowest regions and the entire universe. Who can tell to what depths in the nether regions and to what height in the heavens it extends. The ignorant undergo the 84 *lakhs* [8.4 million] of species of births, not knowing the essence of things. Namdev says the Name is immortal. Forms are innumerable, but the Name is all that.
2 The Name itself is Form. There is no distinction between Name and Form. God became manifest and assumed Name and Form. Hence the Name the *Vedas* established. Beware there is no *mantra* beyond the Name. Those who say otherwise are ignorant. Namdev says the Name is Keshava [God] Himself. This is known only to the loving devotees of the Lord.
3 The all-pervading nature of the Name can only be understood when one recognises one's own 'I'. When one's own name is not recognised, it is impossible to get the all-pervading Name. When one knows oneself, then one finds the Name everywhere. To see the Name as different from the Named creates illusion. Namdev says, 'Ask the Saints.'
4 No one can realise the Name by practice of knowledge, meditation or austerity. Surrender yourself first at the feet of the Guru and learn to know that 'I' myself is that Name. After finding the source of that 'I' merge your individuality in that oneness which is self-existent and devoid of all duality. That which pervades beyond *dvaita* [duality] and *dvaitatita* [that which is beyond duality], that Name has come into the three worlds. The Name is *Parabrahman* itself where there is no action arising out of duality.[4]

The same idea is also found in the Bible: 'In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.'[5]

Q: *So the true name of God will ultimately be revealed by self-enquiry?*

A: Since you yourself are the form of the *japa*, if you know your own nature by enquiring who you are, what a wonder it will be! The *japa* which was previously going on with effort will then continue untiringly and effortlessly in the Heart.[6]

Q: *How long should I do* japa *for? Should I also concentrate on an image of God at the same time?*

A: *Japa* is more important than external form. It must be done until it becomes natural. It starts with effort and is continued until it proceeds of itself. When natural it is called realisation.

Japa may be done even while engaged in other work. That which is, is the one reality. It may be represented by a form, a *japa*, *mantra*, *vichara*, or any kind of attempt to reach reality. All of them finally resolve themselves into that one single reality. *Bhakti*, *vichara* and *japa* are only different forms of our efforts to keep out the unreality. The unreality is an obsession at present but our true nature is reality. We are wrongly persisting in unreality, that is, attachment to thoughts and worldly activities. Cessation of these will reveal the truth. Our attempts are directed towards keeping them out and this is done by thinking of the reality only. Although it is our true nature it looks as if we are thinking of it while doing these practices. What we do really amounts to the removal of obstacles for the revelation of our true being.

Q: *Are our attempts sure to succeed?*

A: Realisation is our nature. It is nothing new to be gained. What is new cannot be eternal. Therefore there is no need for doubting whether one could lose or gain the Self.[7]

Q: *Is it good to do* japa *when we know that enquiry into the Self is the real thing?*

A: All methods are good since they will lead to the enquiry eventually. *Japa* is our real nature. When we realise the Self then *japa* goes on without effort. What is the means at one stage becomes the goal at another. When effortless constant *japa* goes on, it is realisation.[8]

Q: *I am not learned in the scriptures and I find the method of self-enquiry too hard for me. I am a woman with seven children and a lot of household cares and it leaves me little time for meditation. I request Bhagavan to give me some simpler and easier method.*

A: No learning or knowledge of scriptures is necessary to know the Self, as no man requires a mirror to see himself. All knowledge is required only to be given up eventually as not-Self. Nor is household work or cares with children necessarily an obstacle. If you can do nothing more at least continue saying 'I, I' to yourself mentally as advised in *Who am I?* '. . . if one incessantly thinks "I, I", it will lead to that state [the Self].' Continue to repeat it whatever work you may be doing, whether you are

sitting, standing or walking. 'I' is the name of God. It is the first and greatest of all *mantras*. Even *om* is second to it.[9]

Q: *For controlling the mind, which of the two is better, performing* japa *of the* ajapa *[unspoken]* mantra *or of* omkar *[the sound of* 'om'*]?*

A: What is your idea of unspoken and involuntary *japa* [*ajapa*]? Will it be *ajapa* if you go on repeating with the mouth '*soham, soham*' ['I am he, I am he']? *Ajapa* really means to know that *japa* which goes on involuntarily without being uttered through the mouth. Without knowing this real meaning people think that it means repeating with the mouth the words '*soham, soham*' hundreds of thousands of times, counting them on the fingers or on a string of beads.

Before beginning a *japa* breath control is prescribed. That means, first do *pranayama* [regulating of breath] and then begin repeating the *mantra*. *Pranayama* means first closing the mouth, doesn't it? If, by stopping the breath, the five elements in the body are bound down and controlled, what remains is the real Self. That Self will by itself be repeating always '*aham, aham*' ['I, I']. That is *ajapa*. Knowing this, how could that which is repeated by mouth be *ajapa*? The vision of the real Self which performs *japa* of its own accord involuntarily and in a never-ending stream, like the flowing down continuously of oil, is *ajapa*, *gayatri* and everything.

If you know who it is that is doing *japa* you will know what *japa* is. If you search and try to find out who it is that is doing *japa*, that *japa* itself becomes the Self.

Q: *Is there no benefit at all in doing* japa *with the mouth?*

A: Who said there is no benefit? Such *japa* will be the means for *chitta suddhi* [purifying the mind]. As the *japa* is done repeatedly the effort ripens and sooner or later leads to the right path. Good or bad, whatever is done never goes to waste. Only the differences and the merits and demerits of each will have to be told, looking to the stage of development of the person concerned.[10]

Q: *Is not mental* japa *better than oral* japa*?*

A: Oral *japa* consists of sounds. The sounds arise from thoughts, for one must think before one expresses the thoughts in words. The thoughts form the mind. Therefore mental *japa* is better than oral *japa*.

Q: *Should we not contemplate the* japa *and repeat it orally also?*

A: When the *japa* becomes mental, where is the need for the sounds?

Japa, becoming mental, becomes contemplation. *Dhyana*, contemplation and mental *japa* are the same. When thoughts cease to be promiscuous and one thought persists to the exclusion of all others, it is said to be contemplation. The object of *japa* or *dhyana* is the exclusion of several thoughts and confining oneself to one single thought. Then that thought too vanishes into its source – absolute consciousness. The Self, the mind engages in *japa* and then sinks into its own source.

Q: *The mind is said to be from the brain.*

A: Where is the brain? It is in the body. I say that the body itself is a projection of the mind. You speak of the brain when you think of the body. It is the mind which creates the body, the brain in it and also ascertains that the brain is its seat.

Q: *Sri Bhagavan has said that the* japa *must be traced to its source. Is it not the mind that is meant?*

A: All these are only the workings of the mind. *Japa* helps to fix the mind on a single thought. All other thoughts are first subordinated until they disappear. When it becomes mental it is called *dhyana*. *Dhyana* is your true nature. It is however called *dhyana* because it is made with effort. Effort is necessary so long as thoughts are promiscuous. Because you are with other thoughts, you call the continuity of a single thought meditation or *dhyana*. If that *dhyana* becomes effortless it will be found to be your real nature.[11]

Q: *People give some names to God and say that the name is sacred and that repetitions of the name bestow merit on the individual. Can it be true?*

A: Why not? You bear a name to which you answer. But your body was not born with that name written on it, nor did it say to anyone that it bore such and such a name. And yet a name is given to you and you answer to that name, because you have identified yourself with the name. Therefore the name signified something and it is not a mere fiction. Similarly, God's name is effective. Repetition of the name is remembrance of what it signifies. Hence its merit.[12]

Q: *While making* japa *for an hour or more I fall into a state like sleep. On waking up I recollect that my* japa *has been interrupted. So I try again.*

A: 'Like sleep', that is right. It is the natural state. Because you

are now associated with the ego, you consider that the natural state is something which interrupts your work. So you must have the experience repeated until you realise that it is your natural state. You will then find that *japa* is extraneous but still it will go on automatically. Your present doubt is due to that false identity, namely of identifying yourself with the mind that does the *japa*. *Japa* means clinging to one thought to the exclusion of all other thoughts. That is its purpose. It leads to *dhyana* which ends in Self-realisation or *jnana*.

Q: *How should I carry on* japa?

A: One should not use the name of God mechanically and superficially without the feeling of devotion.[13]

Q: *So mechanical repetition is unproductive?*

A: Acute diseases will not be cured merely by repeating the name of the medicine but only by drinking the medicine. Similarly, the bonds of birth and death will not cease merely by doing many repetitions of *mahavakyas* such as 'I am Siva'. Instead of wandering about repeating 'I am the supreme', abide as the supreme yourself. The misery of birth and death will not cease by vocally repeating countless times 'I am that', but only by abiding as that.[14]

Q: *Can anyone get any benefit by repeating sacred syllables* [mantras] *picked up casually?*

A: No. He must be competent and initiated in such *mantras*. This is illustrated by the story of the king and his minister. A king visited his premier in his residence. There he was told that the premier was engaged in repetition of sacred syllables. The king waited for him, and on meeting him, asked what the *mantra* was. The premier said that it was the holiest of all, *gayatri*. The king desired to be initiated by the premier but the premier confessed his inability to initiate him. Therefore the king learned it from someone else, and, meeting the minister later, he repeated the *gayatri* and wanted to know if it was right. The minister said that the *mantra* was correct, but it was not proper for him to say it. When pressed for an explanation, the minister called to a page close by and ordered him to take hold of the king. The order was not obeyed. The order was often repeated, and still not obeyed. The king flew into a rage and ordered the same man to hold the minister, and it was immediately done. The minister laughed and said that the incident was the explanation required by the king. 'How?' asked the king. The minister replied, 'The order was the same and the executor also, but the authority was different. When I ordered, the effect was nil, whereas, when you ordered, there was immediate effect. Similarly with *mantras*.[15]

Q: *I am taught that* mantra japa *is very potent in practice.*

A: The Self is the greatest of all *mantras* – it goes on automatically and eternally. If you are not aware of this internal *mantra*, you should take to it consciously as *japa*, which is attended with effort, to ward off all other thoughts. By constant attention to it, you will eventually become aware of the internal *mantra* which is the state of realisation and is effortless. Firmness in this awareness will keep you continually and effortlessly in the current, however much you may be engaged in other activities.[16]

By repetition of *mantras*, the mind gets controlled. Then the *mantra* becomes one with the mind and also with the *prana* [the energy that sustains the body].

When the syllables of the *mantra* become one with the *prana*, it is termed *dhyana*, and when *dhyana* becomes deep and firm it leads to *sahaja sthiti* [the natural state].[17]

Q: *I have received a* mantra. *People frighten me by saying that it may have unforeseen results if repeated. It is only* pranava [om]. *So I seek advice. May I repeat it? I have considerable faith in it.*

A: Certainly, it should be repeated with faith.

Q: *Will it do by itself, or can you kindly give me any further instructions?*

A: The object of *mantra japa* is to realise that the same *japa* is already going on in oneself even without effort. The oral *japa* becomes mental and the mental *japa* finally reveals itself as being eternal. That *mantra* is the person's real nature. That is also the state of realisation.

Q: *Can the bliss of* samadhi *be gained thus?*

A: The *japa* becomes mental and finally reveals itself as the Self. That is *samadhi*.[18]

CHAPTER 12
Life in the world

There is a well-established Hindu tradition which prescribes four stages of life (*asramas*) for serious spiritual seekers:

1 *Brahmacharya* (celibate study). A long period of scriptural study prior to marriage, usually in an institution which specialises in Vedic scholarship.
2 *Grihastha* (marriage and family). At the conclusion of his studies the aspirant is expected to marry and to discharge his business and household duties conscientiously, but without attachment to them.
3 *Vanaprastha* (forest hermit). When all family obligations have been fulfilled (which usually means when the children are married off), the aspirant may retire to a solitary place, usually a forest, and engage in full-time meditation.
4 *Sannyasa* (wandering monk). In the final stage the seeker drops out of the world completely and becomes a wandering mendicant monk. Having no material, social or financial entanglements the *sannyasi* has theoretically removed all the attachments which previously impeded his progress towards Self-realisation.

This time-honoured structure sustained the common Indian belief that it was necessary to abandon one's family and take to a meditative life of celibate asceticism if one was seriously interested in realising the Self. Sri Ramana was asked about this belief many times but he always refused to endorse it. He consistently refused to give his devotees permission to give up their worldly responsibilities in favour of a meditative life and he always insisted that realisation was equally accessible to everyone, irrespective of their physical circumstances. Instead of advising physical renunciation he told all his devotees that it would be spiritually more productive for them to discharge their normal duties and obligations with an awareness that there was no

individual 'I' performing or accepting responsibility for the acts which the body performed. He firmly believed that mental attitude had a greater bearing on spiritual progress than physical circumstances and he persistently discouraged all questioners who felt that a manipulation of their environment, however slight, would be spiritually beneficial.

The only physical changes he ever sanctioned were dietary. He accepted the prevailing Hindu theory of diet which claimed that the type of food consumed affected the quantity and quality of one's thoughts and he recommended a moderate intake of vegetarian food as the most useful aid to spiritual practice.

The Hindu dietary theory which Sri Ramana endorsed classifies different foods according to the mental states that they induce:

1 *Sattva* (purity or harmony) Dairy produce, fruit, vegetables and cereals are deemed to be *sattvic* foods. A diet which consists largely of these products helps spiritual aspirants to maintain a still, quiet mind.
2 *Rajas* (activity) *Rajasic* foods include meat, fish and hot spicy foods such as chillies, onions and garlic. Ingestion of these foods results in an overactive mind.
3 *Tamas* (sluggishness) Foods which are decayed, stale or the product of a fermentation process (e.g. alcohol) are classified as *tamasic*. Consumption of these foods leads to apathetic, torpid states of mind which hamper clear decisive thinking.

Q: *I have a good mind to resign from service and remain constantly with Sri Bhagavan.*

A: Bhagavan is always with you, in you, and you are yourself Bhagavan. To realise this it is neither necessary to resign your job nor run away from home. Renunciation does not imply apparent divesting of costumes, family ties, home, etc., but renunciation of desires, affection and attachment. There is no need to resign your job, only resign yourself to God, the bearer of the burden of all. One who renounces desires actually merges in the world and expands his love to the whole universe. Expansion of love and affection would be a far better term for a true devotee of God than renunciation, for one who renounces the immediate ties actually extends the bonds of affection and love to a wider world

beyond the borders of caste, creed and race. A *sannyasi* who apparently casts away his clothes and leaves his home does not do so out of aversion to his immediate relations but because of the expansion of his love to others around him. When this expansion comes, one does not feel that one is running away from home, instead one drops from it like a ripe fruit from a tree. Till then it would be folly to leave one's home or job.[1]

Q: *How does a* grihastha *[householder] fare in the scheme of* moksha *[liberation]? Should he not necessarily become a mendicant in order to attain liberation?*

A: Why do you think you are a *grihastha*? Similar thoughts that you are a *sannyasi* [wandering monk] will haunt you, even if you go out as a *sannyasi*. Whether you continue in the household or renounce it and go to the forest, your mind haunts you. The ego is the source of thought. It creates the body and the world and it makes you think of being the *grihastha*. If you renounce, it will only substitute the thought of *sannyasa* for that of *grihastha* and the environment of the forest for that of the household. But the mental obstacles are always there for you. They even increase greatly in the new surroundings. It is no help to change the environment. The one obstacle is the mind and it must be overcome whether in the home or in the forest. If you can do it in the forest, why not in the home? Therefore, why change the environment? Your efforts can be made even now, whatever the environment.

Q: *Is it possible to enjoy* samadhi *[awareness of reality] while busy in worldly work?*

A: The feeling 'I work' is the hindrance. Ask yourself 'Who works?' Remember who you are. Then the work will not bind you, it will go on automatically. Make no effort either to work or to renounce; it is your effort which is the bondage. What is destined to happen will happen. If you are destined not to work, work cannot be had even if you hunt for it. If you are destined to work, you will not be able to avoid it and you will be forced to engage yourself in it. So, leave it to the higher power; you cannot renounce or retain as you choose.

Q: *Bhagavan said yesterday that while one is engaged in search of God 'within', 'outer' work would go on automatically. In the life of Sri Chaitanya it is said that during his lectures to students he was really seeking Krishna within and he forgot all about his body and went on talking of Krishna only. This raises a doubt as to whether work can safely be left to itself. Should one keep part of one's attention on the physical work?*

A: The Self is all. Are you apart from the Self? Or can the work go on without the Self? The Self is universal so all actions will go on whether you strain yourself to be engaged in them or not. The work will go on of itself. Thus Krishna told Arjuna that he need not trouble to kill the Kauravas because they were already slain by God. It was not for him to resolve to work and worry himself about it, but to allow his own nature to carry out the will of the higher power.

Q: *But the work may suffer if I do not attend to it.*

A: Attending to the Self means attending to the work. Because you identify yourself with the body, you think that work is done by you. But the body and its activities, including that work, are not apart from the Self. What does it matter whether you attend to the work or not? When you walk from one place to another you do not attend to the steps you take and yet you find yourself after a time at your goal. You see how the business of walking goes on without your attending to it. So also with other kinds of work.[2]

Q: *If one holds the Self in remembrance, will one's actions always be right?*

A: They ought to be. However, such a person is not concerned with the right or wrong of actions. His actions are God's and therefore right.

Q: *How can my mind be still if I have to use it more than other people? I want to go into solitude and renounce my headmaster's work.*

A: No. You may remain where you are and go on with the work. What is the undercurrent which vivifies the mind, enables it to do all this work? It is the Self. So that is the real source of your activity. Simply be aware of it during your work and do not forget it. Contemplate in the background of your mind even whilst working. To do that, do not hurry, take your own time. Keep the remembrance of your real nature alive, even while working, and avoid haste which causes you to forget. Be deliberate. Practise meditation to still the mind and cause it to become aware of its true relationship to the Self which supports it. Do not imagine it is you who are doing the work. Think that it is the underlying current which is doing it. Identify yourself with the current. If you work unhurriedly, recollectedly, your work or service need not be a hindrance.[3]

Q: *In the early stages would it not be a help to a man to seek solitude and give up his outer duties in life?*

A: Renunciation is always in the mind, not in going to forests or solitary places or giving up one's duties. The main thing is to see that the mind does not turn outward but inward. It does not really rest with a man whether he goes to this place or that or whether he gives up his duties or not. All these events happen according to destiny. All the activities that the body is to go through are determined when it first comes into existence. It does not rest with you to accept or reject them. The only freedom you have is to turn your mind inward and renounce activities there.

Q: *But is it not possible for something to be a help, especially to a beginner, like a fence round a young tree? For instance, don't our books say that it is helpful to go on pilgrimages to sacred shrines or to get* sat-sanga*?*

A: Who said they are not helpful? Only such things do not rest with you, whereas turning your mind inward does. Many people desire the pilgrimage or *sat-sanga* that you mention, but do they all get it?

Q: *Why is it that turning inward alone is left to us and not any outer things?*

A: If you want to go to fundamentals, you must enquire who you are and find out who it is who has freedom or destiny. Who are you and why did you get this body that has these limitations?[4]

Q: *Is solitude necessary for* vichara*?*

A: There is solitude everywhere. The individual is solitary always. His business is to find it out within, not to seek it outside himself.[5]

Solitude is in the mind of man. One might be in the thick of the world and maintain serenity of mind. Such a one is in solitude. Another may stay in a forest, but still be unable to control his mind. Such a man cannot be said to be in solitude. Solitude is a function of the mind. A man attached to desires cannot get solitude wherever he may be, whereas a detached man is always in solitude.

Q: *So then, one might be engaged in work and be free from desire and keep up solitude. Is it so?*

A: Yes. Work performed with attachment is a shackle, whereas work performed with detachment does not affect the doer. One who works like this is, even while working, in solitude.[6]

Q: *Our everyday life is not compatible with such efforts.*

A: Why do you think you are active? Take the gross example of your arrival here. You left home in a cart, took a train, alighted at the railway station here, got into a cart there and found yourself in this ashram. When asked, you say that you travelled here all the way from your town. Is it true? Is it not a fact that you remained as you were and there were movements of conveyances all along the way? Just as those movements are confounded with your own, so also are the other activities. They are not your own, they are God's activities.[7]

Q: *How can cessation of activity* [nivritti] *and peace of mind be attained in the midst of household duties which are of the nature of constant activity?*

A: As the activities of the wise man exist only in the eyes of others and not in his own, although he may be accomplishing immense tasks, he really does nothing. Therefore his activities do not stand in the way of inaction and peace of mind. For he knows the truth that all activities take place in his mere presence and that he does nothing. Hence he will remain as the silent witness of all the activities taking place.[8]

Q: *Is it harder for westerners to withdraw inwards?*

A: Yes, they are *rajasic* [mentally overactive] and their energy goes outwards. We must be inwardly quiet, not forgetting the Self, and then externally we can go on with activity. Does a man who is acting on the stage in a female part forget that he is a man? Similarly, we too must play our parts on the stage of life, but we must not identify ourselves with those parts.

Q: *How does one remove the spiritual sloth of others?*

A: Have you removed your own? Turn your enquiries towards the Self. The force set up within you will operate on others also.[9]

Q: *But how can I help another with his problem, his troubles?*

A: What is this talk of another – there is only the one. Try to realise that there is no I, no you, no he, only the one Self which is all. If you believe in the problem of another, you are believing in something outside the Self. You will best help him by realising the oneness of everything rather than by outward activity.[10]

Q: *Do you approve of sexual continence?*

A: A true *brahmachari* [celibate] is one who dwells in *Brahman*. Then there is no question of desires any more.

Q: *At Sri Aurobindo's ashram there is a rigid rule that married*

couples are permitted to live there on condition that they have no sexual intercourse.

A: What is the use of that? If it exists in the mind, what use is it to force people to abstain?

Q: *Is marriage a bar to spiritual progress?*

A: The householder's life is not a bar, but the householder must do his utmost to practise self-control. If a man has a strong desire for the higher life then the sex tendency will subside. When the mind is destroyed, the other desires are destroyed also.[11]

Q: *I have committed sexual sin.*

A: Even if you have, it does not matter so long as you do not think afterwards that you have done so. The Self is not aware of any sin and renunciation of sex is internal, not merely of the body alone.

Q: *I am carried away by the sight of the breasts of a young woman neighbour and I am often tempted to commit adultery with her. What should I do?*

A: You are always pure. It is your senses and body which tempt you and which you confuse with your real Self. So first know who is tempted and who is there to tempt. But even if you do commit adultery, do not think about it afterwards, because you are yourself always pure. You are not the sinner.[12]

Q: *How do we root out our sex idea?*

A: By rooting out the false idea of the body being the Self. There is no sex in the Self. Be the Self and then you will have no sex troubles.

Q: *Can fasting cure sexual desire?*

A: Yes, but it is temporary. Mental fast is the real aid. Fasting is not an end in itself. There must be spiritual development side by side. Complete fasting makes the mind too weak. The spiritual quest must be kept up right through a fast if it is to benefit spiritually.[13]

Q: *Can one progress spiritually by fasting?*

A: Fasting should be chiefly mental [abstention from thoughts]. Mere abstinence from food will do no good, it will even upset the mind. Spiritual unfoldment will come rather by regulating eating. But if, during a fast of one month, the spiritual outlook has been maintained, then in about ten days after the breaking of the fast (if it be rightly broken and followed by judicious eating) the mind will become pure and steady, and remain so.[14]

In the early days after my coming here, I had my eyes closed

and I was so deeply absorbed in meditation that I hardly knew whether it was day or night. I had no food and no sleep. When there is movement in the body, you need food. If you have food, you need sleep. If there is no movement, you do not need sleep. Very little food is enough to sustain life. That used to be my experience. Somebody or other used to offer me a tumblerful of some liquid diet whenever I opened my eyes. That was all I ever ate. But remember one thing: except when one is absorbed in a state where the mind is motionless, it is not possible to give up sleep or food altogether. When the body and mind are engaged in the ordinary pursuits of life, the body reels if you give up food and sleep.

There are differing theories concerning how much a *sadhaka* should eat and how much he should sleep. Some say that it is healthy to go to bed at 10 p.m. and wake up at 2 a.m. That means that four hours sleep is enough. Some say that four hours sleep is not enough, but that it should be six hours. It amounts to this, that sleep and food should not be taken in excess. If you want to cut off either of them completely, your mind will always be directed towards them. Therefore, the *sadhaka* should do everything in moderation.[15]

There is no harm in eating three to four times a day. But only do not say 'I want this kind of food and not that kind' and so on. Moreover, you take these meals in twelve hours of waking whereas you are not eating in twelve hours of sleep. Does sleep lead you to *mukti*? It is wrong to suppose that simple inactivity leads one to *mukti*.[16]

Q: *What about diet?*

A: Food affects the mind. For the practice of any kind of yoga, vegetarianism is absolutely necessary since it makes the mind more *sattvic* [pure and harmonious].

Q: *Could one receive spiritual illumination while eating flesh foods?*

A: Yes, but abandon them gradually and accustom yourself to *sattvic* foods. However, once you have attained illumination it will make less difference what you eat, as, on a great fire, it is immaterial what fuel is added.[17]

Q: *We Europeans are accustomed to a particular diet and a change of diet affects the health and weakens the mind. Is it not necessary to keep up one's physical health?*

A: Quite necessary. The weaker the body the stronger the mind grows.

Q: *In the absence of our usual diet our health suffers and the mind loses strength.*

A: What do you mean by strength of mind?

Q: *The power to eliminate worldly attachment.*

A: The quality of food influences the mind. The mind feeds on the food consumed.

Q: *Really! Then how can Europeans adjust themselves to* sattvic *food only?*

A: Habit is only adjustment to the environment. It is the mind that matters. The fact is that the mind has been trained to think certain foods tasty and good. The food material is to be had both in vegetarian and non-vegetarian diet equally well. But the mind desires such food as it is accustomed to and considers tasty.

Q: *Are there restrictions for the realised man with regard to food?*

A: No. He is steady and not influenced by the food he takes.

Q: *Is it not killing life to prepare meat diet?*

A: *Ahimsa* [non-violence] stands foremost in the code of discipline for the yogis.

Q: *Even plants have life.*

A: So too the slabs you sit on!

Q: *May we gradually get ourselves accustomed to vegetarian food?*

A: Yes. That is the way.[18]

Q: *Is it harmless to continue smoking?*

A: No, for tobacco is a poison. It is better to do without it. It is good that you have given up smoking. Men are enslaved by tobacco and cannot give it up. But tobacco only gives a temporary stimulation to which there must be a reaction with craving for more. It is also not good for meditation practice.

Q: *Do you recommend that meat and alcoholic drinks be given up?*

A: It is advisable to give them up because this abstention is a useful aid for beginners. The difficulty in surrendering them does not arise because they are really necessary, but merely because we have become inured by custom and habit to them.[19]

Q: *Generally speaking, what are the rules of conduct which an aspirant should follow?*

A: Moderation in food, moderation in sleep and moderation in speech.[20]

CHAPTER 13
Yoga

Practitioners of yoga aim for union with the Self (yoga is Sanskrit for union) by undertaking distinctive mental and physical exercises. Most of these exercises can be traced back to the *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali which were written about 2000 years ago. Patanjali's system, known as *raja* yoga, contains eight distinctive levels and practices.

1 *Yama* Conduct of life in relation to others – avoiding untruth, theft, injury to others, sensuality and greed.
2 *Niyama* Conduct towards oneself – cleanliness, tranquillity, austerity, study and devotion.
3 *Asana* Stretching, bending, balancing and sitting exercises. These exercises are nowadays collectively known as *hatha* yoga.
4 *Pranayama* Breathing exercises which aim to control the mind.
5 *Pratyahara* Withdrawing the attention from the body and the senses.
6 *Dharana* Concentration of the mind.
7 *Dhyana* Meditation.
8 *Samadhi* Uninterrupted contemplation of reality.

Most of these practices can be found in other spiritual systems. The only exceptions are *hatha* yoga and *pranayama* and it is these which give *raja* yoga its distinctive character. When visitors asked Sri Ramana about these practices he would usually criticise *hatha* yoga because of its obsession with the body. It is a fundamental premise of his teachings that spiritual problems can only be solved by controlling the mind, and because of this, he never encouraged the practice of spiritual disciplines which devoted themselves primarily to the well-being of the body. He had a higher opinion of *pranayama* (breath control), saying that it was a useful aid for those who could not otherwise control their mind, but on the whole he tended to regard it as a beginner's practice. His views on

the other aspects of *raja* yoga (such as morality, meditation and *samadhi*) have been dealt with in separate chapters.

In addition to *raja* yoga there is another popular system called *kundalini* yoga. The practitioners of this system concentrate on psychic centres (*chakras*) in the body in order to generate a spiritual power they call *kundalini*. The aim of this practice is to force the *kundalini* up a psychic channel (the *sushumna*) which runs from the base of the spine to the brain. The *kundalini* yogi believes that when this power reaches the *sahasrara* (the highest *chakra* located in the brain), Self-realisation will result.

Sri Ramana never advised his devotees to practise *kundalini* yoga since he regarded it as being both potentially dangerous and unnecessary. He accepted the existence of the *kundalini* power and the *chakras* but he said that even if the *kundalini* reached the *sahasrara* it would not result in realisation. For final realisation, he said, the *kundalini* must go beyond the *sahasrara*, down another *nadi* (psychic nerve) he called *amritanadi* (also called the *paranadi* or *jivanadi*) and into the Heart-centre on the right-hand side of the chest. Since he maintained that self-enquiry would automatically send the *kundalini* to the Heart-centre, he taught that separate yoga exercises were unnecessary.

> The Self is reached by the search for the origin of the ego and by diving into the Heart. This is the direct method of Self-realisation. One who adopts it need not worry about *nadis*, the brain centre [*sahasrara*], the *sushumna*, the *paranadi*, the *kundalini*, *pranayama* or the six centres [*chakras*].[1]

In addition to the practices outlined above, Hinduism contains another yoga called *karma* yoga, the yoga of action. Practitioners of this system aim to evolve spiritually by selflessly serving and assisting others. Although it is spoken of highly in the *Bhagavad Gita*, Sri Ramana generally discouraged his devotees from following this path since it presupposes the existence of an 'I' who is going to perform the good deeds and 'other people' who are in need of assistance. He only encouraged it if he felt that particular devotees were incapable of following the paths of *jnana*, *bhakti* or *raja* yoga.

> If an aspirant be unsuited temperamentally for the first two methods [*jnana* and *bhakti*], and circumstantially on account of age for the third method [yoga], he must try the *karma marga* [the path of *karma* yoga]. His nobler instincts become more evident and he derives impersonal pleasure. The man also becomes duly equipped for one of the three aforesaid paths.[2]

Sri Ramana stressed that to be successful, the *karma* yogi must be free of the notion that he himself is helping others, and that he must also be unattached and indifferent to the consequences of his actions. Although he rarely gave *karma* yoga more than a lukewarm endorsement he did admit that both of these conditions would be met if all actions were performed without the 'I am the doer' idea.

Q: *Yoga means union. I wonder union of what with what?*

A: Exactly. Yoga implies prior division and it means later union of one thing with another. But who is to be united and with whom? You are the seeker, seeking union with something. If you assume this then that something must be apart from you. But your Self is intimate to you and you are always aware of it. Seek it and be it. Then it will expand as the infinite and there will be no question of yoga. Whose is the separation [*viyoga*]?[3]

Q: *I don't know. Is there really separation?*

A: Find out to whom is the *viyoga*. That is yoga. Yoga is common to all paths. Yoga is really nothing but ceasing to think that you are different from the Self or reality. All the yogas – *karma*, *jnana*, *bhakti* and *raja* – are just different paths to suit different natures with different modes of evolution. They are all aimed at getting people out of the long-cherished notion that they are different from the Self. There is no question of union or yoga in the sense of going and joining something that is somewhere away from us or different from us, because you never were or could be separate from the Self.[4]

Q: *What is the difference between yoga and enquiry?*

A: Yoga enjoins *chitta-vritti-nirodha* [repression of thoughts][5] whereas I prescribe *atmanveshana* [quest of oneself]. This latter method is more practicable. The mind is repressed in swoon, or as the effect of fasting. But as soon as the cause is withdrawn the mind revives, that is, the thoughts begin to flow as before. There are just two ways of controlling the mind. Either seek its source,

or surrender it to be struck down by the supreme power. Surrender is the recognition of the existence of a higher overruling power. If the mind refuses to help in seeking the source, let it go and wait for its return; then turn it inwards. No one succeeds without patient perseverance.[6]

Q: *Is it necessary to control one's breath?*

A: Breath control is only an aid for diving deep within oneself. One may as well dive down by controlling the mind. When the mind is controlled, the breath is controlled automatically. One need not attempt breath control, mind control is enough. Breath control is only recommended for those who cannot control their minds straightaway.[7]

Q: *When should one do* pranayama *and why is it effective?*

A: In the absence of enquiry and devotion, the natural sedative *pranayama* [breath regulation] may be tried. This is known as *yoga marga* [the path of yoga]. If life is imperilled the whole interest centres round one point, the saving of life. If the breath is held the mind cannot afford to (and does not) jump at its pets – external objects. Thus there is rest for the mind so long as the breath is held. All attention being turned on breath or its regulation, other interests are lost.[8]

The source of breath is the same as that of the mind. Therefore the subsidence of either leads effortlessly to the subsidence of the other.

Q: *Will concentration on* chakras *quieten the mind?*

A: Fixing their minds on psychic centres such as the *sahasrara* [the thousand-petalled lotus *chakra*], yogis remain any length of time without awareness of their bodies. As long as this state continues they appear to be immersed in some kind of joy. But when the mind which has become tranquil emerges and becomes active again it resumes its worldly thoughts. It is therefore necessary to train it with the help of practices like *dhyana* [meditation] whenever it becomes externalised. It will then attain a state in which there is neither subsidence nor emergence.[9]

Q: *Is the mind control induced by* pranayama *also temporary?*

A: Quiescence lasts only so long as the breath is controlled. So it is transient. The goal is clearly not *pranayama*. It extends on to *pratyahara* [withdrawal], *dharana* [concentration of mind], *dhyana* [meditation] and *samadhi*. Those stages deal with control of the mind. Such mind control becomes easier for a person who has earlier practised *pranayama*. *Pranayama* therefore leads one to the higher stages. Because these higher stages involve controlling the mind, one can say that mind control is the ultimate aim of yoga.

A more advanced man will naturally go direct to control of mind without wasting his time in practising control of breath.[10]

Q: Pranayama *has three phases – exhalation, inhalation and retention. How should they be regulated?*

A: Completely giving up identification with the body alone is exhalation [*rechaka*]; merging within through the enquiry 'Who am I?' along is inhalation [*puraka*]; abiding as the one reality 'I am that' alone is retention [*kumbhaka*]. This is the real *pranayama*.[11]

Q: *I find it said in* Maha Yoga *that in the beginning of meditation one may attend to the breath, that is, its inspiration and expiration, and that after a certain amount of stillness of mind is attained, one can dive into the Heart seeking the source of the mind. I have been badly in want of some such practical hint. Can I follow this method? Is it correct?*

A: The thing is to kill the mind somehow. Those who have not the strength to follow the enquiry method are advised to adopt *pranayama* as a help to control the mind. This *pranayama* is of two kinds, controlling and regulating the breath, or simply watching the breath.[12]

Q: *For controlling the breath, is not the ratio 1:4:2 for inhaling, retaining the breath and exhaling best?*

A: All those proportions, sometimes regulated not by counting but by uttering *mantras*, are aids to controlling the mind. That is all. Watching the breath is also one form of *pranayama*. Inhaling, retaining and exhaling is more violent and may be harmful in some cases, for example when there is no proper Guru to guide the seeker at every step and stage. But merely watching the breath is easy and involves no risk.[13]

Q: *Is the manifestation of* kundalini sakti *[*kundalini *power] possible only for those who follow the yogic path of acquiring* sakti *[power], or is it possible also for those who follow the path of devotion [*bhakti*] or love [*prema*]?*

A: Who does not have *kundalini sakti*? When the real nature of that *sakti* is known, it is called *akhandakara vritti* [unbroken consciousness] or *aham sphurana* [effulgence of 'I']. *Kundalini sakti* is there for all people whatever path they follow. It is only a difference in name.

Q: *It is said that the* sakti *manifests itself in five phases, ten phases, a hundred phases and a thousand phases. Which is true:*

five or ten or a hundred or a thousand?

A: *Sakti* has only one phase. If it is said to manifest itself in several phases, it is only a way of speaking. The *sakti* is only one.

Q: *Can a* jnani *help not only those who follow his path but also others who follow other paths such as yoga?*

A: Undoubtedly. He can help people whatever path they choose to follow. It is something like this. Suppose there is a hill. There will be very many paths to climb it. If he were to ask people to climb by the way he came, some may like it and some may not. If people who do not like it are asked to climb by that path, and by that path only, they will not be able to come up. Hence a *jnani* helps people following any particular path, whatever it may be. People who are midway may not know about the merits and demerits of other paths, but one who has climbed to the summit and sits there observing others coming up is able to see all the paths. He will therefore be able to tell people who are coming up to move a little to this side or that or to avoid a pitfall. The goal is the same for all.[14]

Q: *How can one direct the* prana *or life-force into the* sushumna nadi *[a psychic nerve in the spine] so that the* chit-jada-granthi *[the identification of consciousness with the body] can be severed in the manner stated in* Sri Ramana Gita*?*

A: By enquiring 'Who am I?' The yogi may be definitely aiming at rousing the *kundalini* and sending it up the *sushumna*. The *jnani* may not be having this as his object. But both achieve the same results, that of sending the life-force up the *sushumna* and severing the *chit-jada-granthi*. *Kundalini* is only another name for *atma* or Self or *sakti*. We talk of it as being inside the body, because we conceive ourselves as limited by this body. But it is in reality both inside and outside, being not different from Self or the *sakti* of Self.

Q: *How to churn up the* nadis *[psychic nerves] so that the* kundalini *may go up the* sushumna*?*

A: Though the yogi may have his methods of breath control for this object, the *jnani*'s method is only that of enquiry. When by this method the mind is merged in the Self, the *sakti* or *kundalini*, which is not apart from the Self, rises automatically.[15]

The yogis attach the highest importance to sending the *kundalini* up to the *sahasrara*, the brain centre or the thousand-petalled lotus. They point out the scriptural statement that the life-current enters the body through the fontanelle and argue that,

viyoga [separation] having come about that way, yoga [union] must also be effected in the reverse way. Therefore, they say, we must by yoga practice gather up the *pranas* and enter the fontanelle for the consummation of yoga. The *jnanis* on the other hand point out that the yogi assumes the existence of the body and its separateness from the Self. Only if this standpoint of separateness is adopted can the yogi advise effort for reunion by the practice of yoga.

In fact the body is in the mind which has the brain for its seat. That the brain functions by light borrowed from another source is admitted by the yogis themselves in their fontanelle theory. The *jnani* further argues: if the light is borrowed it must come from its native source. Go to the source direct and do not depend on borrowed resources. That source is the Heart, the Self.[16]

The Self does not come from anywhere else and enter the body through the crown of the head. It is as it is, ever sparkling, ever steady, unmoving and unchanging. The individual confines himself to the limits of the changeful body or of the mind which derives its existence from the unchanging Self. All that is necessary is to give up this mistaken identity, and that done, the ever-shining Self will be seen to be the single non-dual reality.

If one concentrates on the *sahasrara* there is no doubt that the ecstasy of *samadhi* ensues. The *vasanas*, that is the latent mental tendencies, are not however destroyed. The yogi is therefore bound to wake up from the *samadhi* because release from bondage has not yet been accomplished. He must still try to eradicate the *vasanas* inherent in him so that they cease to disturb the peace of his *samadhi*. So he passes down from the *sahasrara* to the Heart through what is called the *jivanadi*, which is only a continuation of the *sushumna*. The *sushumna* is thus a curve. It starts from the lowest *chakra*, rises through the spinal cord to the brain and from there bends down and ends in the Heart. When the yogi has reached the Heart, the *samadhi* becomes permanent. Thus we see that the Heart is the final centre.[17]

Q: Hatha *yogic practices are said to banish diseases effectively and are therefore advocated as necessary preliminaries to* jnana yoga.

A: Let those who advocate them use them. It has not been the experience here. All diseases will be effectively annihilated by continuous self-enquiry.[18] If you proceed on the notion that health of body is necessary for health of mind, there will never be an end to the care of the body.[19]

Q: *Is not* hatha *yoga necessary for the enquiry into the Self?*

A: Each one finds some one method suitable to himself, because of latent tendencies [*purva samskara*].

Q: *Can* hatha *yoga be accomplished at my age?*

A: Why do you think of all that? Because you think the Self is exterior to yourself you desire it and try for it. But do you not exist all along? Why do you leave yourself and go after something external?

Q: *It is said in* Aparoksha Anubhuti *that* hatha *yoga* is *a necessary aid for enquiry into the Self.*

A: The *hatha* yogis claim to keep the body fit so that the enquiry may be effected without obstacles. They also say that life must be prolonged so that the enquiry may be carried to a successful end. Furthermore there are those who use some medicines [*kayakalpa*] with that end in view. Their favourite example is that the screen must be perfect before the painting is begun. Yes, but which is the screen and which the painting? According to them the body is the screen and the enquiry into the Self is the painting. But is not the body itself a picture on the screen, the Self?

Q: *But* hatha *yoga is so much spoken of as an aid.*

A: Yes. Even great pandits well versed in the *vedanta* continue the practice of it. Otherwise their minds will not subside. So you may say it is useful for those who cannot otherwise still the mind.[20]

Q: *What are* asanas *[postures or seats]? Are they necessary?*

A: Many *asanas* with their effects are mentioned in the yoga *sastras*. The seats are the tiger-skin, grass, etc. The postures are the 'lotus posture', the 'easy posture' and so on. Why all these only to know oneself? The truth is that from the Self the ego rises up, confuses itself with the body, mistakes the world to be real, and then, covered with egotistic conceit, it thinks wildly and looks for *asanas* [seats]. Such a person does not understand that he himself is the centre of all and thus forms the basis for all.

The *asana* [seat] is meant to make him sit firm. Where and how can he remain firm except in his own real state? This is the real *asana*.[21]

Attaining the steadiness of not swerving from the knowledge that the base [*asana*] upon which the whole universe rests is only Self, which is the space of true knowledge, the illustrious ground, alone is the firm and motionless posture [*asana*] for excellent *samadhi*.[22]

Q: *In what* asana *is Bhagavan usually seated?*

A: In what *asana*? In the *asana* of the Heart. Wherever it is pleasant, there is my *asana*. That is called *sukhasana*, the *asana* of happiness. That *asana* of the Heart is peaceful, and gives happiness. There is no need for any other *asana* for those who are seated in that one.[23]

Q: *The* Gita *seems to emphasise* karma *yoga, for Arjuna is persuaded to fight. Sri Krishna himself set the example by an active life of great exploits.*

A: The *Gita* starts by saying that you are not the body and that you are not therefore the *karta* [the doer].

Q: *What is the significance?*

A: It means that one should act without thinking that oneself is the actor. Actions will go on even in the egoless state. Each person has come into manifestation for a certain purpose and that purpose will be accomplished whether he considers himself to be the actor or not.

Q: *What is* karma *yoga? Is it non-attachment to* karma *[action] or its fruit?*

A: *Karma* yoga is that yoga in which the person does not arrogate to himself the function of being the actor. All actions go on automatically.

Q: *Is it non-attachment to the fruits of actions?*

A: The question arises only if there is the actor. It is said in all the scriptures that you should not consider yourself to be the actor.

Q: *So* karma *yoga is* 'kartritva buddhi rahita karma' – *action without the sense of doership.*

A: Yes. Quite so.

Q: *The* Gita *teaches that one should have an active life from beginning to end.*

A: Yes, the actorless action.[24]

Q: *If one remains quiet how is action to go on? Where is the place for* karma *yoga?*

A: Let us first understand what *karma* is, whose *karma* it is and who is the doer. Analysing them and enquiring into their truth, one is obliged to remain as the Self in peace. Nevertheless even in that state the actions will go on.

Q: *How will the actions go on if I do not act?*

A: Who asks this question? Is it the Self or another? Is the Self concerned with actions?

Q: *No, not the Self. It is another, different from the Self.*

A: So it is plain that the Self is not concerned with actions and so the question does not arise.[25]

Q: *I want to do* karma *yoga. How can I help others?*

A: Who is there for you to help? Who is the 'I' that is going to help others? First clear up that point and then everything will settle itself.[26]

Q: *That means 'realise the Self'. Does my realisation help others?*

A: Yes, and it is the best help that you can possibly render to others. But really there are no others to be helped. For the realised being sees only the Self, just as the goldsmith sees only the gold while valuing it in various jewels made of gold. When you identify yourself with the body, name and form are there. But when you transcend the body-consciousness, the others also disappear. The realised one does not see the world as different from himself.

Q: *Would it not be better if saints mixed with other people in order to help them?*

A: There are no others to mix with. The Self is the only reality.[27]

The sage helps the world merely by being the real Self. The best way for one to serve the world is to win the egoless state. If you are anxious to help the world, but think that you cannot do so by attaining the egoless state, then surrender to God all the world's problems, along with your own.[28]

Q: *Should I not try to help the suffering world?*

A: The power that created you has created the world as well. If it can take care of you, it can similarly take care of the world also. If God has created the world it is his business to look after it, not yours.[29]

Q: *Is the desire for* swaraj *[political independence] right?*

A: Such desire no doubt begins with self-interest. Yet practical work for the goal gradually widens the outlook so that the individual becomes merged in the country. Such merging of the individuality is desirable and the related *karma* is *nishkama* [unselfish].

Q: *If* swaraj *is gained after a long struggle and terrible sacrifices, is not the person justified in being pleased with the result and elated by it.*

A: He must have in the course of his work surrendered himself to the higher power whose might must be kept in mind and never lost sight of. How then can he be elated? He should not even care for the result of his actions. Then alone the *karma* becomes unselfish.[30]

PART FIVE

Experience

There are no grades of reality. There are grades of experience for the individual but not of reality. Whatever may be the experiences, the experiencer is one and the same.[1]

The Self is certainly within the direct experience of everyone, but not as one imagines it to be. It is only as it is.[2]

CHAPTER 14
Samadhi

The word *samadhi* is widely used in eastern spiritual literature to denote an advanced stage of meditation in which there is a conscious experience of the Self or an intense undisturbed absorption in the object of meditation. Many gradations and sub-divisions of *samadhi* have been described, with different schools and religions each tending to produce their own distinctive categories and terminology.

The classification generally used by Sri Ramana divides the various *samadhis* into the following three-fold division:

1 *Sahaja nirvikalpa samadhi* This is the state of the *jnani* who has finally and irrevocably eliminated his ego. *Sahaja* means 'natural' and *nirvikalpa* means 'no differences'. A *jnani* in this state is able to function naturally in the world, just as any ordinary person does. Knowing that he is the Self, the *sahaja jnani* sees no difference between himself and others and no difference between himself and the world. For such a person, everything is a manifestation of the indivisible Self.

2 *Kevala nirvikalpa samadhi* This is the stage below Self-realisation. In this state there is a temporary but effortless Self-awareness, but the ego has not been finally eliminated. It is characterised by an absence of body-consciousness. Although one has a temporary awareness of the Self in this state, one is not able to perceive sensory information or function in the world. When body-consciousness returns, the ego reappears.

3 *Savikalpa samadhi* In this state Self-awareness is maintained by constant effort. The continuity of the *samadhi* is wholly dependent on the effort put in to maintain it. When Self-attention wavers, Self-awareness is obscured.

The following brief definitions formulated by Sri Ramana should be sufficient to guide the uninitiated through the terminological jungle of *samadhi*:

1 Holding on to reality is *samadhi.*
2 Holding on to reality with effort is *savikalpa samadhi.*
3 Merging in reality and remaining unaware of the world is *nirvikalpa samadhi.*
4 Merging in ignorance and remaining unaware of the world is sleep.
5 Remaining in the primal, pure, natural state without effort is *sahaja nirvikalpa samadhi.*[1]

Q: *What is* samadhi?

A: The state in which the unbroken experience of existence-consciousness is attained by the still mind, alone is *samadhi.* That still mind which is adorned with the attainment of the limitless supreme Self, alone is the reality of God.[2]

When the mind is in communion with the Self in darkness, it is called *nidra* [sleep], that is, the immersion of the mind in ignorance. Immersion in a conscious or wakeful state is called *samadhi. Samadhi* is continuous inherence in the Self in a waking state. *Nidra* or sleep is also inherence in the Self but in an unconscious state. In *sahaja samadhi* the communion is continuous.

Q: *What are* kevala nirvikalpa samadhi *and* sahaja nirvikalpa samadhi?

A: The immersion of the mind in the Self, but without its destruction, is *kevala nirvikalpa samadhi.* In this state one is not free from *vasanas* and so one does not therefore attain *mukti.* Only after the *vasanas* have been destroyed can one attain liberation.

Q: *When can one practise* sahaja samadhi?

A: Even from the beginning. Even though one practises *kevala nirvikalpa samadhi* for years together, if one has not rooted out the *vasanas* one will not attain liberation.[3]

Q: *May I have a clear idea of the difference between* savikalpa *and* nirvikalpa?

A: Holding on to the supreme state is *samadhi.* When it is with effort due to mental disturbances, it is *savikalpa.* When these disturbances are absent, it is *nirvikalpa.* Remaining permanently in the primal state without effort is *sahaja.*[4]

Q: *Is* nirvikalpa samadhi *absolutely necessary before the attainment of* sahaja?

A: Abiding permanently in any of these *samadhis*, either *savikalpa* or *nirvikalpa*, is *sahaja* [the natural state]. What is body-consciousness? It is the insentient body plus consciousness. Both of these must lie in another consciousness which is absolute and unaffected and which remains as it always is, with or without the body-consciousness. What does it then matter whether the body-consciousness is lost or retained, provided one is holding on to that pure consciousness? Total absence of body-consciousness has the advantage of making the *samadhi* more intense, although it makes no difference to the knowledge of the supreme.[5]

Q: *Is* samadhi *the same as* turiya, *the fourth state?*

A: *Samadhi, turiya* and *nirvikalpa* all have the same implication, that is, awareness of the Self. *Turiya* literally means the fourth state, the supreme consciousness, as distinct from the other three states: waking, dreaming and dreamless sleep. The fourth state is eternal and the other three states come and go in it. In *turiya* there is the awareness that the mind has merged in its source, the Heart, and is quiescent there, although some thoughts still impinge on it and the senses are still somewhat active. In *nirvikalpa* the senses are inactive and thoughts are totally absent. Hence the experience of pure consciousness in this state is intense and blissful. *Turiya* is obtainable in *savikalpa samadhi.*[6]

Q: *What is the difference between the bliss enjoyed in sleep and the bliss enjoyed in* turiya?

A: There are not different blisses. There is only one bliss which includes the bliss enjoyed in the waking state, the bliss of all kinds of beings from the lowest animal to the highest Brahma. That bliss is the bliss of the Self. The bliss which is enjoyed unconsciously in sleep is enjoyed consciously in *turiya*, that is the only difference. The bliss enjoyed in the waking state is second-hand, it is an adjunct of the real bliss [*upadhi ananda*].[7]

Q: *Is* samadhi, *the eighth stage of* raja *yoga, the same as the* samadhi *you speak of?*

A: In yoga the term *samadhi* refers to some kind of trance and there are various kinds of *samadhi.* But the *samadhi* I speak of is different. It is *sahaja samadhi.* From here you have *samadhana* [steadiness] and you remain calm and composed even while you

are active. You realise that you are moved by the deeper real Self within. You have no worries, no anxieties, no cares, for you come to realise that there is nothing belonging to you. You know that everything is done by something with which you are in conscious union.

Q: *If this* sahaja samadhi *is the most desirable condition, is there no need for* nirvikalpa samadhi?

A: The *nirvikalpa samadhi* of *raja* yoga may have its use. But in *jnana* yoga this *sahaja sthiti* [natural state] or *sahaja nishtha* [abidance in the natural state] itself is the *nirvikalpa* state. In this natural state the mind is free from doubts. It has no need to swing between alternatives of possibilities and probabilities. It sees no *vikalpas* [differences] of any kind. It is sure of the truth because it feels the presence of the real. Even when it is active, it knows it is active in the reality, the Self, the supreme being.[8]

Q: *What is the difference between deep sleep,* laya *[a trance-like state in which the mind is temporarily in abeyance] and* samadhi?

A: In deep sleep the mind is merged and not destroyed. That which merges reappears. It may happen in meditation also. But the mind which is destroyed cannot reappear. The yogi's aim must be to destroy it and not to sink into *laya*. In the peace of meditation, *laya* sometimes ensues but it is not enough. It must be supplemented by other practices for destroying the mind. Some people have gone into yogic *samadhi* with a trifling thought and after a long time awakened in the trail of the same thought. In the meantime generations have passed in the world. Such a yogi has not destroyed his mind. The true destruction of the mind is the non-recognition of it as being apart from the Self. Even now the mind is not. Recognise it. How can you do it if not in everyday activities which go on automatically? Know that the mind promoting them is not real but is only a phantom proceeding from the Self. That is how the mind is destroyed.[9]

Q: *Can the meditator be affected by physical disturbances during* nirvikalpa samadhi? *My friend and I disagree on this point.*

A: Both of you are right. One of you is referring to *kevala* and the other to *sahaja samadhi*. In both cases the mind is immersed in the bliss of the Self. In the former, physical movements may cause disturbance to the meditator, because the mind has not completely died out. It is still alive and can, as after deep sleep, at any moment be active again. It is compared to a bucket, which,

although completely submerged under water, can be pulled out by a rope which is still attached to it. In *sahaja*, the mind has sunk completely into the Self, like the bucket which has got drowned in the depths of the well along with its rope. In *sahaja* there is nothing left to be disturbed or pulled back to the world. One's activities then resemble that of the child who sucks its mother's milk in sleep, and is hardly aware of the feeding.[10]

Q: *How can one function in the world in such a state?*

A: One who accustoms himself naturally to meditation and enjoys the bliss of meditation will not lose his *samadhi* state whatever external work he does, whatever thoughts may come to him. That is *sahaja nirvikalpa*.[11] *Sahaja nirvikalpa* is *nasa* [total destruction of the mind] whereas *kevala nirvikalpa* is *laya* [temporary abeyance of the mind]. Those who are in the *laya samadhi* state will have to bring the mind back under control from time to time. If the mind is destroyed, as it is in *sahaja samadhi*, it will never sprout again. Whatever is done by such people is just incidental, they will never slide down from their high state.

Those that are in the *kevala nirvikalpa* state are not realised, they are still seekers. Those who are in the *sahaja nirvikalpa* state are like a light in a windless place, or the ocean without waves; that is, there is no movement in them. They cannot find anything which is different from themselves. For those who do not reach that state, everything appears to be different from themselves.[12]

Q: *Is the experience of* kevala nirvikalpa *the same as that of* sahaja, *although one comes down from it to the relative world?*

A: There is neither coming down nor going up – he who goes up and down is not real. In *kevala nirvikalpa* there is the mental bucket still in existence under the water, and it can be pulled out at any moment. *Sahaja* is like the river that has linked up with the ocean from which there is no return. Why do you ask all these questions? Go on practising till you have the experience yourself.[13]

Q: *What is the use of* samadhi *and does thought subsist then?*

A: *Samadhi* alone can reveal the truth. Thoughts cast a veil over reality, and so it is not realised as such in states other than *samadhi*.

In *samadhi* there is only the feeling 'I am' and no thoughts. The experience of 'I am' is 'being still'.

Q: *How can I repeat the experience of* samadhi *or the stillness that I obtain here in your presence?*

A: Your present experience is due to the influence of the

atmosphere in which you find yourself. Can you have it outside this atmosphere? The experience is spasmodic. Until it becomes permanent, practice is necessary.[14]

Q: *Is* samadhi *an experience of calmness or peace?*

A: The tranquil clarity, which is devoid of mental turmoil, alone is the *samadhi* which is the firm base for liberation. By earnestly trying to destroy the deceptive mental turmoil, experience that *samadhi* as the peaceful consciousness which is inner clarity.[15]

Q: *What is the difference between internal and external* samadhi?

A: External *samadhi* is holding on to the reality while witnessing the world, without reacting to it from within. There is the stillness of a waveless ocean. The internal *samadhi* involves loss of body-consciousness.

Q: *The mind does not sink into that state even for a second.*

A: A strong conviction is necessary that 'I am the Self, transcending the mind and the phenomena.'

Q: *Nevertheless, the mind proves to be an unyielding obstacle which thwarts any attempts to sink into the Self.*

A: What does it matter if the mind is active? It is so only on the substratum of the Self. Hold the Self even during mental activities.[16]

Q: *I have read in a book by Romain Rolland about Ramakrishna that* nirvikalpa samadhi *is a terrible and terrifying experience. Is* nirvikalpa *so terrible? Are we then undergoing all these tedious processes of meditation, purification and discipline only to end in a state of terror? Are we going to turn into living corpses?*

A: People have all sorts of notions about *nirvikalpa*. Why speak of Romain Rolland? If those who have all the *Upanishads* and *vedantic* tradition at their disposal have fantastic notions about *nirvikalpa*, who can blame a westerner for similar notions? Some yogis by breathing exercises allow themselves to fall into a cataleptic state far deeper than dreamless sleep, in which they are aware of nothing, absolutely nothing, and they glorify it as *nirvikalpa*. Some others think that once you dip into *nirvikalpa* you become an altogether different being. Still others take *nirvikalpa* to be attainable only through a trance in which the world-consciousness is totally obliterated, as in a fainting fit. All this is due to their viewing it intellectually.

Nirvikalpa is *chit* – effortless, formless consciousness. Where does the terror come in, and where is the mystery in being oneself? To some people whose minds have become ripe from a long practice in the past, *nirvikalpa* comes suddenly as a flood, but to others it comes in the course of their spiritual practice, a practice which slowly wears down the obstructing thoughts and reveals the screen of pure awareness 'I'–'I'. Further practice renders the screen permanently exposed. This is Self-realisation, *mukti*, or *sahaja samadhi*, the natural, effortless state.[17] Mere non-perception of the differences [*vikalpas*] outside is not the real nature of firm *nirvikalpa*. Know that the non-rising of differences [*vikalpas*] in the dead mind alone is the true *nirvikalpa*.

Q: *When the mind begins to subside into the Self there is often a sensation of fear.*

A: The fear and the quaking of one's body while one is entering *samadhi* is due to the slight ego-consciousness still remaining. But when this dies completely, without leaving even a trace, one abides as the vast space of mere consciousness where bliss alone prevails, and the quaking stops.[18]

Q: *Is* samadhi *a blissful or ecstatic state?*

A: In *samadhi* itself there is only perfect peace. Ecstasy comes when the mind revives at the end of *samadhi*, with the remembrance of the peace of *samadhi*. In devotion the ecstasy comes first. It is manifested by tears of joy, hair standing on end and vocal stumbling. When the ego finally dies and the *sahaja* is won, these symptoms and the ecstasies cease.[19]

Q: *On realising* samadhi, *does not one obtain* siddhis *[supernatural powers] also?*

A: In order to display *siddhis*, there must be others to recognise them. That means, there is no *jnana* in the one who displays them. Therefore, *siddhis* are not worth a thought. *Jnana* alone is to be aimed at and gained.[20]

Q: *It is stated in the* Mandukyopanishad *that unless* samadhi, *the eighth and last stage of yoga, is also experienced, there can be no liberation* [moksha] *however much meditation* [dhyana] *or physical austerities* [tapas] *are performed. Is that so?*

A: Rightly understood, they are the same. It makes no difference whether you call it meditation or austerities or absorption, or anything else. That which is steady, continuous like the flow of oil, is austerity, meditation and absorption. To be one's own Self is *samadhi*.

Q: *But it is said in the* Mandukyopanishad *that* samadhi *must necessarily be experienced before attaining liberation.*

A: And who says that it is not so? It is stated not only in the *Mandukyopanishad* but in all the ancient books. But it is true *samadhi* only if you know your Self. What is the use of sitting still for some time like a lifeless object. Suppose you get a boil on your hand and have it operated on under anaesthetic. You don't feel any pain at the time, but does that mean that you were in *samadhi*? It is the same with this too. One has to know what *samadhi* is. And how can you know it without knowing your Self? If the Self is known, *samadhi* will be known automatically.[21]

Samadhi is one's natural state. It is the undercurrent in all the three states of waking, dreaming and sleeping. The Self is not in these states, but these states are in the Self. If we get *samadhi* in our waking state, that will persist in deep sleep also. The distinction between consciousness and unconsciousness belongs to the realm of mind, which is transcended by the state of the real Self.[22]

Q: *So one should always be trying to reach* samadhi?

A: Sages say that the state of equilibrium which is devoid of the ego alone is *mouna-samadhi* [the *samadhi* of silence], the pinnacle of knowledge. Until one attains *mouna-samadhi*, the state in which one is the egoless reality, seek only the annihilation of 'I' as your aim.[23]

CHAPTER 15
Visions and psychic powers

Meditation sometimes brings about spectacular side effects; visions of gods may appear and occasionally supernatural powers such as clairvoyance and telepathy are developed. Both of these effects can be deliberately produced. Concentration on a mental image will sometimes result in visions, particularly if the concentration is done with devotion or if there is a strong desire for the visions to appear. Psychic powers (*siddhis*) may also be attained by special yogic exercises. Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*, the classic text on yoga, lists several exercises which accelerate the development of eight *siddhis* ranging from invisibility to walking on water.

Sri Ramana discouraged his devotees from deliberately pursuing either visions or *siddhis* by pointing out that they were products of the mind which might impede rather than facilitate Self-realisation. If visions came spontaneously he would sometimes admit that they were a sign of progress but he would usually add that they were only temporary experiences in the mind and that they were 'below the plane of Self-realisation'.[1]

If *siddhis* appeared spontaneously he would outline the dangers of becoming attached to them, explain that such powers were more likely to inflate the ego than eliminate it, and emphasise that the desire for *siddhis* and the desire for Self-realisation were mutually exclusive.

> The Self is the most intimate and eternal being whereas the *siddhis* are foreign. *Siddhis* are acquired by effort whereas the Self is not. The powers are sought by the mind which must be kept alert whereas the Self is realised when the mind is destroyed. The powers only manifest when there is the ego. The Self is beyond the ego and is realised only after the ego is eliminated.[2]

Q: *I once before told Sri Bhagavan how I had a vision of Siva about the time of my conversion to Hinduism. A similar experience recurred to me at Courtallam. These visions are momentary but they are blissful. I want to know how they might be made permanent and continuous. Without Siva there is no life in what I see around me. I am so happy to think of him. Please tell me how his vision may be everlasting to me.*

A: You speak of a vision of Siva. Vision is always of an object. That implies the existence of a subject. The value of the vision is the same as that of the seer. That is to say, the nature of the vision is on the same plane as that of the seer. Appearance implies disappearance also. Whatever appears must also disappear. A vision can never be eternal. But Siva is eternal.

The vision implies the seer. The seer cannot deny the existence of the Self. There is no moment when the Self as consciousness does not exist, nor can the seer remain apart from consciousness. This consciousness is the eternal being and the only being. The seer cannot see himself. Does he deny his existence because he cannot see himself with the eyes as in a vision? No. So *pratyaksha* [direct experience] does not mean seeing, but being.

To be is to realise. Hence 'I am that I am'. 'I am' is Siva. Nothing else can be without him. Everything has its being in Siva and because of Siva.

Therefore enquire 'Who am I?' Sink deep within and abide as the Self. That is Siva as being. Do not expect to have visions of him repeated. What is the difference between the objects you see and Siva? He is both the subject and the object. You cannot be without Siva because Siva is always realised here and now. If you think you have not realised him it is wrong. This is the obstacle for realising Siva. Give up that thought also and realisation is there.

Q: *Yes. But how shall I effect it as quickly as possible?*

A: This is the obstacle for realisation. Can there be the individual without Siva? Even now he is you. There is no question of time. If there is a moment of non-realisation, the question of realisation can arise. But as it is, you cannot be without him. He is already realised, ever realised and never non-realised.[3]

Q: *I wish to get* sakshatkara *[direct realisation] of Sri Krishna. What should I do to get it?*

A: What is your idea of Sri Krishna and what do you mean by *sakshatkara*?

Q: *I mean Sri Krishna who lived in Brindavan and I want to see him as the* gopis *[his female devotees] saw him.*

A: You see, you think he is a human being or one with a human form, the son of so and so, whereas he himself has said, 'I am in the Heart of all beings, I am the beginning, the middle and the end of all forms of life.' He must be within you, as he is within all. He is your Self or the Self of your Self. So if you see this entity [the Self] or have *sakshatkara* of it, you will have *sakshatkara* of Krishna. Direct realisation of the Self and direct realisation of Krishna cannot be different. However, to go your own way, surrender completely to Krishna and leave it to him to grant the *sakshatkara* you want.[4]

Q: *Is it possible to speak to* Iswara *[God] as Sri Ramakrishna did?*

A: When we can speak to each other why should we not speak to *Iswara* in the same way?

Q: *Then why does it not happen with us?*

A: It requires purity and strength of mind and practice in meditation.

Q: *Does God become evident if the above conditions exist?*

A: Such manifestations are as real as your own reality. In other words, when you identify yourself with the body, as in the waking state, you see gross objects. When in the subtle body or in the mental plane as in dreams, you see objects equally subtle. In the absence of identification in deep sleep you see nothing. The objects seen bear a relation to the state of the seer. The same applies to visions of God.

By long practice the figure of God, as meditated upon, appears in dreams and may later appear in the waking state also.[5]

Q: *Many visitors here tell me that they get visions or thought-currents from you. I have been here for the last month and a half and still I have not the slightest experience of any kind. Is it because I am unworthy of your grace?*

A: Visions and thought-currents are had according to the state of mind. It depends on the individuals and not upon the universal presence. Moreover, they are immaterial. What matters is peace of mind.[6]

What is realisation? Is it to see God with four hands, bearing a conch, a wheel and a club? Even if God should appear in that form, how is the disciple's ignorance wiped out? The truth must be eternal realisation. The direct perception is ever-present experience. God himself is known when he is directly perceived. It does not mean that he appears before the devotee in some

particular form. Unless the realisation is eternal it cannot serve any useful purpose. Can the appearance of God with four hands be eternal realisation? It is phenomenal and illusory. There must be a seer. The seer alone is real and eternal.

Let God appear as the light of a million suns. Is it *pratyaksha* [direct experience]? To see a vision of God the eyes and the mind are necessary. It is indirect knowledge, whereas the seer is direct experience. The seer alone is *pratyaksha.*[7]

Q: *People talk of Vaikuntha, Kailasa, Indraloka, Chandraloka [the Hindu heavens]. Do they really exist?*

A: Certainly. You can rest assured that they all exist. There also a swami like me will be found seated on a couch and disciples will also be seated around him. They will ask something and he will say something in reply. Everything will be more or less like this. What of that? If one sees Chandraloka, one will ask for Indraloka, and after Indraloka, Vaikuntha and after Vaikuntha, Kailasa, and so on, and the mind goes on wandering. Where is *shanti* [peace]? If *shanti* is required, the only correct method of securing it is by self-enquiry. Through self-enquiry Self-realisation is possible. If one realises the Self, one can see all these worlds within one's Self. The source of everything is one's own Self, and if one realises the Self, one will not find anything different from the Self. Then these questions will not arise. There may or may not be a Vaikuntha or a Kailasa but it is a fact that you are here, isn't it? How are you here? Where are you? After you know about these things, you can think of all those worlds.[8]

Q: *Are the* siddhis *mentioned in Patanjali's* sutras *true or only his dream?*

A: He who is *Brahman* or the Self will not value those *siddhis.* Patanjali himself says that they are all exercised with the mind and that they impede Self-realisation.

Q: *What about the powers of so-called supermen?*

A: Whether powers are high or low, whether of the mind or of a supermind, they exist only with reference to the one who has the power. Find out who that is.[9]

Q: *Are* siddhis *to be achieved on the spiritual path or are they opposed to* mukti *[liberation]?*

A: The highest *siddhi* is realisation of the Self, for once you realise the truth you cease to be drawn to the path of ignorance.

Q: *Then what use are the* siddhis?

A: There are two kinds of *siddhis* and one kind may well be a stumbling block to realisation. It is said that by *mantra*, by some drug possessing occult virtues, by severe austerities or by *samadhi* of a certain kind, powers can be acquired. But these powers are not a means to Self-knowledge, for even when you acquire them, you may quite well be in ignorance.

Q: *What is the other kind?*

A: They are manifestations of power and knowledge which are quite natural to you when you realise the Self. They are *siddhis* which are the products of the normal and natural *tapas* [spiritual practice] of the man who has reached the Self. They come of their own accord, they are God given. They come according to one's destiny but whether they come or not, the *jnani*, who is settled in the supreme peace, is not disturbed by them. For he knows the Self and that is the unshakeable *siddhi.* But these *siddhis* do not come by trying for them. When you are in the state of realisation, you will know what these powers are.[10]

Q: *Does the sage use occult powers for making others realise the Self, or is the mere fact of his Self-realisation enough for it?*

A: The force of his Self-realisation is far more powerful than the use of all other powers.[11]

Though *siddhis* are said to be many and different, *jnana* alone is the highest of those many different *siddhis*, because those who have attained other *siddhis* will desire *jnana.* Those who have attained *jnana* will not desire other *siddhis.* Therefore aspire only for *jnana.*[12]

Although the powers appear to be wonderful to those who do not possess them, yet they are only transient. It is useless to aspire for that which is transient. All these wonders are contained in the one changeless Self.[13]

Greedily begging for worthless occult powers [*siddhis*] from God, who will readily give himself, who is everything, is like begging for worthless stale gruel from a generous-natured philanthropist who will readily give everything.

In the Heart which catches fire with the blazing flame of supreme devotion, all the occult powers will gather together. However, with a heart that has become a complete prey to the feet of the Lord, the devotee will not have any desire for those *siddhis.* Know that if aspirants who are making efforts on the path to liberation set their heart upon occult powers, their dense bondage will be strengthened more and more, and hence the lustre of their ego will wax more and more.

The attainment [*siddhi*] of Self, which is the perfect whole, the radiance of liberation, alone is the attainment of true knowledge, whereas the other kinds of *siddhi*, beginning with *anima* [the ability to become as small as an atom] belong to the delusion of the power of imagination of the foolish mind.[14]

People see many things which are far more miraculous than the so-called *siddhis*, yet do not wonder at them simply because they occur every day. When a man is born he is no bigger than this electric bulb, but then he grows up and becomes a giant wrestler, or a world-famed artist, orator, politician or sage. People do not view this as a miracle but they are wonderstruck if a corpse is made to speak.[15]

Q: *I have been interesting myself in metaphysics for over twenty years. But I have not gained any novel experience as so many others claim to do. I have no powers of clairvoyance, clairaudience, etc. I feel myself locked up in this body and nothing more.*

A: It is right. Reality is only one and that is the Self. All the rest are mere phenomena in it, of it, and by it. The seer, the objects and the sight all are the Self only. Can anyone see or hear, leaving the Self aside? What difference does it make to see or hear anyone in close proximity or over enormous distance? The organs of sight and hearing are needed in both cases and so the mind is also required. None of them can be dispensed with in either case. There is dependence one way or another. Why then should there be a glamour about clairvoyance or clairaudience?

Moreover, what is acquired will also be lost in due course. They can never be permanent.[16]

Q: *Is it not good to acquire powers such as telepathy?*

A: Telepathy or radio enables one to see and hear from afar. They are all the same, hearing and seeing. Whether one hears from near or far does not make any difference to the one who hears. The fundamental factor is the hearer, the subject. Without the hearer or the seer, there can be no hearing or seeing. The latter are the functions of the mind. The occult powers [*siddhis*] are therefore only in the mind. They are not natural to the Self. That which is not natural, but acquired, cannot be permanent, and is not worth striving for.

These *siddhis* denote extended powers. A man is possessed of limited powers and is miserable. Because of this he wants to expand his powers so that he may be happy. But consider if it will be so. If with limited perceptions one is miserable, with extended perceptions the misery must increase proportionately. Occult powers will not bring happiness to anyone, but will make one all the more miserable.

Moreover what are these powers for? The would-be occultist [*siddha*] desires to display the *siddhis* so that others may appreciate him. He seeks appreciation, and if it is not forthcoming he will not be happy. There must be others to appreciate him. He may even find another possessor of higher powers. That will cause jealousy and breed unhappiness.

Which is the real power? Is it to increase prosperity or bring about peace? That which results in peace is the highest perfection [*siddhi*].[17]

CHAPTER 16
Problems and experiences

Physical pain and discomfort, mental anarchy, emotional fluctuations and occasional interludes of blissful peace are frequently experienced as by-products of spiritual practice. Such manifestations may not be as dramatic as the ones outlined in the previous two chapters but they tend to be of great interest to the people who experience them. They are usually interpreted as either milestones or obstacles on the road to the Self and, depending on which interpretation is favoured, great efforts are expended in trying to prolong or eliminate them.

Sri Ramana tended to play down the importance of most spiritual experiences and if they were reported to him he would usually stress that it was more important to be aware of the experiencer than to indulge in or analyse the experience. He would sometimes digress into explanations about the causes of the experiences and he occasionally evaluated them as being either beneficial or detrimental to Self-awareness, but on the whole he tended to discourage interest in them.

He was more forthcoming when devotees asked his advice about problems they had encountered during meditation. He would listen patiently to their complaints, offer constructive solutions to their problems and, if he felt that it was appropriate, try to show them that from the standpoint of the Self all problems were non-existent.

Q: *One has at times vivid flashes of a consciousness whose centre is outside the normal self, and which seems to be all-inclusive. Without concerning ourselves with philosophical concepts, how would Bhagavan advise me to work towards getting, retaining and extending those rare flashes? Does the* abhyasa *[spiritual practice] necessary for such experiences involve retirement?*

A: You say 'outside': for whom is the inside or outside? These

can exist only so long as there are the subject and object. For whom are these two again? On investigation you will find that they resolve into the subject only. See who is the subject and this enquiry will lead you to pure consciousness beyond the subject.

You say 'normal self': the normal self is the mind. The mind is with limitations. But pure consciousness is beyond limitations, and is reached by investigation into the 'I'.

You say 'getting': the Self is always there. You have only to remove the veil obstructing the revelation of the Self.

You say 'retaining': once you realise the Self, it becomes your direct and immediate experience. It is never lost.

You say 'extending': there is no extending of the Self, for it is as it always is, without contraction or expansion.

You say 'retirement': abiding in the Self is solitude, because there is nothing alien to the Self. Retirement must be from one place or state to another. There is neither the one nor the other apart from the Self. All being the Self, retirement is impossible and inconceivable.

You say '*abhyasa*': *abhyasa* is only the prevention of disturbance to the inherent peace. You are always in your natural state whether you make *abhyasa* or not. To remain as you are, without question or doubt, is your natural state.[1]

Q: *There are times when persons and things take on a vague, almost transparent form as in a dream. One ceases to observe them from outside, but one is passively conscious of their existence, while not actively conscious of any kind of selfhood. There is a deep quietness in the mind. Is the mind at such times ready to dive into the Self? Or is this condition unhealthy, the result of self-hypnotism? Should it be encouraged as a means of getting temporary peace?*

A: There is consciousness along with quietness in the mind. This is exactly the state to be aimed at. The fact that the question has been framed on this point, without realising that it is the Self, shows that the state is not steady but casual.

The word 'diving' is only appropriate if one has to turn the mind within in order to avoid being distracted by the outgoing tendencies of the mind. At such times one has to dive below the surface of these external phenomena. But when deep quietness prevails without obstructing the consciousness, where is the need to dive?[2]

Q: *When I meditate I feel a certain bliss at times. On such*

occasions, should I ask myself 'Who is it that experiences this bliss?'

A: If it is the real bliss of the Self that is experienced, that is, if the mind has really merged in the Self, such a doubt will not arise at all. The question itself shows real bliss was not reached.

All doubts willl cease only when the doubter and his source have been found. There is no use removing doubts one by one. If we clear one doubt, another doubt will arise and there will be no end of doubts. But if, by seeking the source of the doubter, the doubter is found to be really non-existent, then all doubts will cease.

Q: *Sometimes I hear internal sounds. What should I do when such things happen?*

A: Whatever may happen, keep up the enquiry into the self, asking 'Who hears these sounds?' till the reality is reached.[3]

Q: *Sometimes, while in meditation, I feel blissful and tears come to my eyes. At other times I do not have them. Why is that?*

A: Bliss is a thing which is always there and is not something which comes and goes. That which comes and goes is a creation of the mind and you should not worry about it.

Q: *The bliss causes a physical thrill in the body, but when it disappears I feel dejected and desire to have the experience over again. Why?*

A: You admit that you were there both when the blissful feeling was experienced and when it was not. If you realise that 'you' properly, those experiences will be of no account.

Q: *For realising that bliss, there must be something to catch hold of, mustn't there?*

A: There must be a duality if you are to catch hold of something else, but what is is only the one Self, not a duality. Hence, who is to catch hold of whom? And what is the thing to be caught?[4]

Q: *When I reach the thoughtless stage in my* sadhana *I enjoy a certain pleasure, but sometimes I also experience a vague fear which I cannot properly describe.*

A: You may experience anything, but you should never rest content with that. Whether you feel pleasure or fear, ask yourself who feels the pleasure or the fear and so carry on the *sadhana* until pleasure and fear are both transcended, till all duality ceases and till the reality alone remains.

There is nothing wrong in such things happening or being

experienced, but you must never stop at that. For instance, you must never rest content with the pleasure of *laya* [temporary abeyance of the mind] experienced when thought is quelled, you must press on until all duality ceases.[5]

Q: *How does one get rid of fear?*

A: What is fear? It is only a thought. If there is anything besides the Self there is reason to fear. Who sees things separate from the Self? First the ego arises and sees objects as external. If the ego does not rise, the Self alone exists and there is nothing external. For anything external to oneself implies the existence of the seer within. Seeking it there will eliminate doubt and fear. Not only fear, all other thoughts centred round the ego will disappear along with it.[6]

Q: *How can the terrible fear of death be overcome?*

A: When does that fear seize you? Does it come when you do not see your body, say, in dreamless sleep? It haunts you only when you are fully 'awake' and perceive the world, including your body. If you do not see these and remain your pure Self, as in dreamless sleep, no fear can touch you.

If you trace this fear to the object, the loss of which gives rise to it, you will find that that object is not the body, but the mind which functions in it. Many a man would be only too glad to be rid of his diseased body and all the problems and inconvenience it creates for him if continued awareness were vouchsafed to him. It is the awareness, the consciousness, and not the body, he fears to lose. Men love existence because it is eternal awareness, which is their own Self. Why not then hold on to the pure awareness right now, while in the body, and be free from all fear?[7]

Q: *When I try to be without all thoughts, I pass into sleep. What should I do about it?*

A: Once you go to sleep you can do nothing in that state. But while you are awake, try to keep away all thoughts. Why think about sleep? Even that is a thought, is it not? If you are able to be without any thought while you are awake, that is enough. When you pass into sleep the state which you were in before falling asleep will continue when you wake up. You will continue from where you left off when you fell into slumber. So long as there are thoughts of activity there will also be sleep. Thought and sleep are counterparts of one and the same thing.

We should not sleep too much or go without it altogether, but sleep only moderately. To prevent too much sleep, we must try

and have no thoughts or *chalana* [movement of the mind], we must eat only *sattvic* food and that only in moderate measure, and not indulge in too much physical activity. The more we control thought, activity and food the more we shall be able to control sleep. But moderation ought to be the rule, as explained in the *Gita*, for the seeker on the path. Sleep is the first obstacle, as explained in the books, for all *sadhaks*. The second obstacle is said to be *vikshepa* or the sense objects of the world which divert one's attention. The third is said to be *kashaya* or thoughts in the mind about previous experiences with sense objects. The fourth, *ananda* [bliss], is also called an obstacle, because in that state a feeling of separation from the source of *ananda*, enabling the enjoyer to say 'I am enjoying *ananda*', is present. Even this has to be surmounted. The final stage of *samadhi* has to be reached in which one becomes *ananda* or one with reality. In this state the duality of enjoyer and enjoyment ceases in the ocean of *sat-chit-ananda* or the Self.[8]

Q: *So one should not try to perpetuate blissful or ecstatic states?*

A: The final obstacle in meditation is ecstasy; you feel great bliss and happiness and want to stay in that ecstasy. Do not yield to it but pass on to the next stage which is great calm. The calm is higher than ecstasy and it merges into *samadhi*. Successful *samadhi* causes a waking sleep state to supervene. In that state you know that you are always consciousness, for consciousness is your nature. Actually, one is always in *samadhi* but one does not know it. To know it all one has to do is to remove the obstacles.[9]

Q: *Through poetry, music,* japa, bhajans *[devotional songs], the sight of beautiful landscapes, reading the lines of spiritual verses, etc., one experiences sometimes a true sense of the all-pervading unity. Is that feeling of deep blissful quiet in which the personal self has no place the same as the entering into the Heart of which Bhagavan speaks? Will undertaking these activities lead to a deeper* samadhi *and so ultimately to a full vision of the real?*

A: There is happiness when agreeable things are presented to the mind. It is the happiness inherent in the Self, and there is no other happiness. And it is not alien and afar. You are diving into the Self on those occasions which you consider pleasurable and that diving results in self-existent bliss. But the association of ideas is responsible for foisting that bliss on other things or occurrences while, in fact, that bliss is within you. On these occasions you are

plunging into the Self, though unconsciously. If you do so consciously, with the conviction that comes of the experience that you are identical with the happiness which is truly the Self, the one reality, you call it realisation. I want you to dive consciously into the Self, that is the Heart.[10]

Q: *I have been making* sadhana *for nearly twenty years and I can see no progress. What should I do? From about five o'clock every morning I concentrate on the thought that the Self alone is real and all else unreal. Although I have been doing this for about twenty years I cannot concentrate for more than two or three minutes without my thoughts wandering.*

A: There is no other way to succeed than to draw the mind back every time it turns outwards and fix it in the Self. There is no need for meditation or *mantra* or *japa* or anything of the sort, because these are our real nature. All that is needed is to give up thinking of objects other than the Self. Meditation is not so much thinking of the Self as giving up thinking of the not-Self. When you give up thinking of outward objects and prevent your mind from going outwards by turning it inwards and fixing it in the Self, the Self alone remains.

Q: *What should I do to overcome the pull of these thoughts and desires? How should I regulate my life so as to attain control over my thoughts?*

A: The more you get fixed in the Self the more other thoughts will drop off of themselves. The mind is nothing but a bundle of thoughts, and the 'I'-thought is the root of all of them. When you see who this 'I' is and find out where it comes from all thoughts get merged in the Self.

Regulation of life, such as getting up at a fixed hour, bathing, doing *mantra*, *japa*, observing ritual, all this is for people who do not feel drawn to self-enquiry or are not capable of it. But for those who can practise this method all rules and discipline are unnecessary.[11]

Q: *Why cannot the mind be turned inward in spite of repeated attempts?*

A: It is done by practice and dispassion and it succeeds only gradually. The mind, having been so long a cow accustomed to graze stealthily on others' estates, is not easily confined to her stall. However much her keeper tempts her with luscious grass and fine fodder, she refuses the first time. Then she takes a bit, but her innate tendency to stray away asserts itself and she slips away.

On being repeatedly tempted by the owner, she accustoms herself to the stall until finally, even if let loose, she does not stray away. Similarly with the mind. If once it finds its inner happiness it will not wander outward.

Q: *Are there not modulations in contemplation according to circumstances?*

A: Yes. There are. At times there is illumination and then contemplation is easy. At other times contemplation is impossible even with repeated attempts. This is due to the working of the three *gunas* [*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*].

Q: *Is it influenced by one's activities and circumstances?*

A: Those cannot influence it. It is the sense of doership – *kartritva buddhi* – that forms the impediment.[12]

Q: *My mind remains clear for two or three days and turns dull for the next two or three days; and so it alternates. What is it due to?*

A: It is quite natural. It is the play of purity [*sattva*], activity [*rajas*] and inertia [*tamas*] alternating. Do not regret the *tamas*, but when *sattva* comes into play, hold on to it and make the best of it.[13]

Q: *A man sometimes finds that the physical body does not permit steady meditation. Should he practise yoga for training the body for the purpose?*

A: It is according to one's *samskaras* [predispositions]. One man will practise *hatha* yoga for curing his bodily ills, another man will trust to God to cure them, a third man will use his will-power for it and a fourth man may be totally indifferent to them. But all of them will persist in meditation. The quest for the Self is the essential factor and all the rest are mere accessories.[14]

Q: *My attempts at concentration are frustrated by sudden palpitations of the heart and accompanying hard, short and quick breaths. Then my thoughts also rush out and the mind becomes uncontrollable. Under healthy conditions I am more successful and my breath comes to a standstill with deep concentration. I had long been anxious to get the benefit of Sri Bhagavan's proximity for the successful culmination of my meditation and so came here after considerable effort. I fell ill here. I could not meditate and so I felt depressed. I made a determined effort to concentrate my mind even though I was troubled by short and quick breaths. Though partly successful it does not satisfy me. The time for my leaving the place is drawing near. I feel more and more depressed as I contemplate leaving the place. Here I find people obtaining peace by meditation in the hall whereas I am not blessed with such peace. This itself has a depressing effect on me.*

A: This thought, 'I am not able to concentrate', is itself an obstacle. Why should the thought arise?

Q: *Can one remain without thoughts rising all the twenty-four hours of the day? Should I remain without meditation?*

A: What is 'hours' again? It is a concept. Each question of yours is prompted by a thought.

Whenever a thought arises, do not be carried away by it. You become aware of the body when you forget the Self. But can you forget the Self? Being the Self how can you forget it? There must be two selves for one to forget the other. It is absurd. So the Self is not depressed, nor is it imperfect. It is ever happy. The contrary feeling is a mere thought which has actually no stamina in it. Be rid of thoughts. Why should one attempt meditation? Being the Self one remains always realised. Only be free from thoughts.

You think that your health does not permit your meditation. This depression must be traced to its origin. The origin is the wrong identification of the body with the Self. The disease is not of the Self, it is of the body. But the body does not come and tell you that it is possessed by the disease. It is you who say so. Why? Because you have wrongly identified yourself with the body. The body itself is a thought. Be as you really are. There is no reason to be depressed.[15]

Q: *Suppose there is some disturbance during meditation, such as mosquito bites. Should one persist in meditation and try to bear the bites and ignore the interruption, or drive the mosquitoes away and then continue the meditation?*

A: You must do as you find most convenient. You will not attain *mukti* simply because you drive them away. The thing is to attain one-pointedness and then to attain *mano-nasa* [destruction of the mind]. Whether you do this by putting up with the mosquito bites or driving the mosquitoes away is left to you. If you are completely absorbed in your meditation you will not know that the mosquitoes are biting you. Till you attain that stage why should you not drive them away?[16]

Q: *People practising meditation are said to get new diseases; at any rate, I feel some pain in the back and front of the chest. This is stated to be a test by God. Will Bhagavan explain this and say if it is true?*

A: There is no Bhagavan outside you and no test is therefore instituted. What you believe to be a test or a new disease resulting from spiritual practices is really the strain that is now brought to play upon your nerves and the five senses. The mind which was hitherto operating through the *nadis* [nerves] to sense external objects, maintaining a link between itself and the organs of perception, is now required to withdraw from the link' and this action of withdrawal naturally causes a strain, a sprain or a snap attendant with pain. Some people call this a disease and some call it a test of God. All these pains will go if you continue your meditation, bestowing your thought solely on understanding your Self or on Self-realisation. There is no greater remedy than this continuous yoga or union with God or *atman*. Pain is inevitable as a result of discarding the *vasanas* [mental tendencies] which you have had for so long.[17]

Q: *What is the best way of dealing with desires and* vasanas *with a view to getting rid of them – satisfying them or suppressing them?*

A: If a desire can be got rid of by satisfying it, there will be no harm in satisfying such a desire. But desires generally are not eradicated by satisfaction. Trying to root them out that way is like trying to quench a fire by pouring inflammable spirits on it. At the same time, the proper remedy is not forcible suppression, since such repression is bound to react sooner or later into a forceful surging up of desires with undesirable consequences. The proper way to get rid of a desire is to find out 'Who gets the desire? What is its source?' When this is found, the desire is rooted out and it will never again emerge or grow. Small desires such as the desire to eat, drink, sleep and attend to calls of nature, though these may also be classed among desires, you can safely satisfy. They will not implant *vasanas* in your mind, necessitating further birth. Those activities are just necessary to carry on life and are not likely to develop or leave behind *vasanas* or tendencies. As a general rule, therefore, there is no harm in satisfying a desire where the satisfaction will not lead to further desires by creating *vasanas* in the mind.[18]

Q: *In the practice of meditation are there any signs in the realm of subjective experience which will indicate the aspirant's progress towards Self-realisation?*

A: The degree of freedom from unwanted thoughts and the degree of concentration on a single thought are the measures to gauge the progress.[19]

PART SIX

Theory

All metaphysical discussion is profitless unless it causes us to seek within the Self for the true reality.

All controversies about creation, the nature of the universe, evolution, the purpose of God, etc., are useless. They are not conducive to our true happiness. People try to find out about things which are outside of them before they try to find out 'Who am I?' Only by the latter means can happiness be gained.[1]

CHAPTER 17
Creation theories and the reality of the world

Sri Ramana had little or no interest in the theoretical side of spirituality. His principal concern was to bring people to an awareness of the Self and, to achieve this end, he always insisted that practice was more important than speculation. He discouraged questions of a theoretical nature either by remaining silent when they were asked or by asking the questioner to find the source of the 'I' that was asking the question. Occasionally he would relent and give detailed expositions on various aspects of philosophy, but if his questioners persisted too long with their queries, or if the conversation veered towards sterile intellectualism, he would change the subject and direct the attention of his questioners towards more practical matters.

Many of these philosophical conversations centred around the nature and origin of the physical world since Sri Ramana was known to have views which were totally at variance with the common-sense view of the world. As with most other topics he tailored his statements to conform to the different levels of understanding he encountered in his questioners, but even so, almost all his ideas were radical refutations of the concepts of physical reality that most people cherish.

Sri Ramana adopted three different standpoints when he spoke about the nature of the physical world. He advocated all of them at different times but it is clear from his general comments on the subject that he only considered the first two theories given below to be either true or useful.

1 *Ajata vada* (the theory of non-causality). This is an ancient Hindu doctrine which states that the creation of the world never happened at all. It is a complete denial of all causality in the physical world. Sri Ramana endorsed this view by saying that it is the *jnani*'s experience that nothing ever comes into existence or ceases to be because the Self alone exists as the sole unchanging reality. It is a corollary of

this theory that time, space, cause and effect, essential components of all creation theories, exist only in the minds of *ajnanis* and that the experience of the Self reveals their non-existence.

This theory is not a denial of the reality of the world, only of the creative process which brought it into existence. Speaking from his own experience Sri Ramana said that the *jnani* is aware that the world is real, not as an assemblage of interacting matter and energy, but as an uncaused appearance in the Self. He enlarged on this by saying that because the real nature or substratum of this appearance is identical with the beingness of the Self, it necessarily partakes of its reality. That is to say, the world is not real to the *jnani* simply because it appears, but only because the real nature of the appearance is inseparable from the Self.

The *ajnani*, on the other hand, is totally unaware of the unitary nature and source of the world and, as a consequence, his mind constructs an illusory world of separate interacting objects by persistently misinterpreting the sense-impressions it receives. Sri Ramana pointed out that this view of the world has no more reality than a dream since it superimposes a creation of the mind on the reality of the Self. He summarised the difference between the *jnani*'s and the *ajnani*'s standpoint by saying that the world is unreal if it is perceived by the mind as a collection of discrete objects and real when it is directly experienced as an appearance in the Self.

2 *Drishti-srishti vada* If his questioners found the idea of *ajata* or non-causality impossible to assimilate, he would teach them that the world comes into existence simultaneously with the appearance of the 'I'-thought and that it ceases to exist when the 'I'-thought is absent. This theory is known as *drishti-srishti*, or simultaneous creation, and it says, in effect, that the world which appears to an *ajnani* is a product of the mind that perceives it, and that in the absence of that mind it ceases to exist. The theory is true in so far as the mind does create an imaginary world for itself, but from the standpoint of the Self, an imaginary 'I' creating an imaginary world is no creation at all, and so the doctrine of *ajata* is not subverted. Although Sri Ramana sometimes said that *drishti-srishti* was not the ultimate truth about creation

he encouraged his followers to accept it as a working hypothesis. He justified this approach by saying that if one can consistently regard the world as an unreal creation of the mind then it loses its attraction and it becomes easier to maintain an undistracted awareness of the 'I'-thought.

3 *Srishti-drishti vada* (gradual creation). This is the common-sense view which holds that the world is an objective reality governed by laws of cause and effect which can be traced back to a single act of creation. It includes virtually all western ideas on the subject from the 'big bang' theory to the biblical account in Genesis. Sri Ramana only invoked theories of this nature when he was talking to questioners who were unwilling to accept the implications of the *ajata* and *drishti-srishti* theories. Even then, he would usually point out that such theories should not be taken too seriously as they were only promulgated to satisfy intellectual curiosity.

Literally, *drishti-srishti* means that the world only exists when it is perceived whereas *srishti-drishti* means that the world existed prior to anyone's perception of it. Although the former theory sounds perverse, Sri Ramana insisted that serious seekers should be satisfied with it, partly because it is a close approximation to the truth and partly because it is the most beneficial attitude to adopt if one is seriously interested in realising the Self.

Q: *How has* srishti *[creation] come about? Some say it is predestined. Others say it is the Lord's* leela *or sport. What is the truth?*

A: Various accounts are given in books. But is there creation? Only if there is creation do we have to explain how it came about. We may not know about all these theories but we certainly know that we exist. Why not know the 'I' and then see if there is a creation?[1]

Q: *In the* vedanta *of Sri Sankaracharya the principle of the creation of the world has been accepted for the sake of beginners, but for the advanced the principle of non-creation is put forward. What is your view on this matter?*

A: 'There is no dissolution or creation, no one in bondage, nor anyone pursuing spiritual practices. There is no one desiring

liberation nor anyone liberated. This is the absolute truth.' This *sloka* appears in the second chapter of Gaudapada's *karika*. One who is established in the Self sees this by his knowledge of reality.[2]

Q: *Is not the Self the cause of this world we see around us?*

A: Self itself appears as the world of diverse names and forms. However, Self does not act as the efficient cause [*nimitta karana*], creating, sustaining and destroying it. Do not ask 'Why does the confusion of Self, not knowing the truth that it itself appears as the world, arise?' If instead you enquire 'To whom does this confusion occur?', it will be discovered that no such confusion ever existed for Self.[3]

Q: *You seem to be an exponent of* ajata *doctrine of* advaita vedanta.

A: I do not teach only the *ajata* doctrine. I approve of all schools. The same truth has to be expressed in different ways to suit the capacity of the hearer. The *ajata* doctrine says, 'Nothing exists except the one reality. There is no birth or death, no projection or drawing in, no seeker, no bondage, no liberation. The one unity alone exists.' To such as find it difficult to grasp this truth and who ask, 'How can we ignore this solid world we see all around us?', the dream experience is pointed out and they are told, 'All that you see depends on the seer. Apart from the seer, there is no seen.' This is called the *drishti-srishti vada* or the argument that one first creates out of one's mind and then sees what one's mind itself has created. Some people cannot grasp even this and they continue to argue in the following terms: 'The dream experience is so short, while the world always exists. The dream experience was limited to me. But the world is felt and seen not only by me, but by so many others. We cannot call such a world non-existent.' When people argue in this way they can be given a *srishti-drishti* theory, for example, 'God first created such and such a thing, out of such and such an element, and then something else was created, and so on.' That alone will satisfy this class. Their minds are otherwise not satisfied and they ask themselves, 'How can all geography, all maps, all sciences, stars, planets and the rules governing or relating to them and all knowledge be totally untrue?' To such it is best to say, 'Yes, God created all this and so you see it.'

Q: *But all these cannot be true. Only one doctrine can be true.*

A: All these theories are only to suit the capacity of the learner. The absolute can only be one.[4]

The *vedanta* says that the cosmos springs into view simultaneously with the seer and that there is no detailed process of creation. This is said to be *yugapat-srishti* [instantaneous creation]. It is quite similar to the creations in dream where the experiencer springs up simultaneously with the objects of experience. When this is told, some people are not satisfied for they are deeply rooted in objective knowledge. They seek to find out how there can be sudden creation. They argue that an effect must be preceded by a cause. In short, they desire an explanation for the existence of the world which they see around them. Then the *srutis* [scriptures] try to satisfy their curiosity by theories of creation. This method of dealing with the subject of creation is called *krama-srishti* [gradual creation]. But the true seeker can be content with *yugapat-srishti*, instantaneous creation.[5]

Q: *What is the purpose of creation?*

A: It is to give rise to this question. Investigate the answer to this question, and finally abide in the supreme or rather the primal source of all, the Self. The investigation will resolve itself into a quest for the Self and it will cease only after the non-Self is sifted away and the Self realised in its purity and glory.[6]

There may be any number of theories of creation. All of them extend outwardly. There will be no limit to them because time and space are unlimited. They are however only in the mind. If you see the mind, time and space are transcended and the Self is realised.

Creation is explained scientifically or logically to one's own satisfaction. But is there any finality about it? Such explanations are called *krama-srishti* [gradual creation]. On the other hand, *drishti-srishti* [simultaneous creation] is *yugapat-srishti*. Without the seer there are no objects seen. Find the seer and the creation is comprised in him. Why look outward and go on explaining the phenomena which are endless?[7]

Q: *The* Vedas *contain conflicting accounts of cosmogony. Ether is said to be the first creation in one place; vital energy* [prana] *in another place; something else in yet another; water in still another, and so on. How are these to be reconciled? Do not these impair the credibility of the* Vedas?

A: Different seers saw different aspects of truth at different times, each emphasising one view. Why do you worry about their conflicting statements? The essential aim of the *Vedas* is to teach us the nature of the imperishable *atman* and show us that we are that.

Q: *I am satisfied with that portion.*

A: Then treat all the rest as *artha vada* [auxiliary arguments] or expositions for the sake of the ignorant who seek to trace the genesis of things.[8]

Q: *I form part of the creation and so remain dependent. I cannot solve the riddle of creation until I become independent. Yet I ask Sri Bhagavan, should he not answer the question for me?*

A: Yes. It is Bhagavan that says, 'Become independent and solve the riddle yourself. It is for you to do it.' Again, where are you now that you ask this question? Are you in the world, or is the world within you? You must admit that the world is not perceived in your sleep although you cannot deny your existence then. The world appears when you wake up. So where is it? Clearly the world is your thought. Thoughts are your projections. The 'I' is first created and then the world. The world is created by the 'I' which in its turn rises up from the Self. The riddle of the creation of the world is thus solved if you solve the creation of the 'I'. So I say, find your Self.

Again, does the world come and ask you 'Why do "I" exist? How was "I" created?' It is you who ask the question. The questioner must establish the relationship between the world and himself. He must admit that the world is his own imagination. Who imagines it? Let him again find the 'I' and then the Self. Moreover, all the scientific and theological explanations do not harmonise. The diversities in such theories clearly show the uselessness of seeking such explanations. Such explanations are purely mental or intellectual and nothing more. Still, all of them are true according to the standpoint of the individual. There is no creation in the state of realisation. When one sees the world, one does not see oneself. When one sees the Self, the world is not seen. So see the Self and realise that there has been no creation.[9]

Q: 'Brahman *is real. The world* [jagat] *is illusion' is the stock phrase of Sri Sankaracharya. Yet others say, 'The world is reality.' Which is true?*

A: Both statements are true. They refer to different stages of development and are spoken from different points of view. The aspirant [*abhyasi*] starts with the definition, that which is real exists always. Then he eliminates the world as unreal because it is changing. The seeker ultimately reaches the Self and there finds unity as the prevailing note. Then, that which was originally rejected as being unreal is found to be a part of the unity. Being

absorbed in the reality, the world also is real. There is only being in Self-realisation, and nothing but being.[10]

Q: *Sri Bhagavan often says that* maya *[illusion] and reality are the same. How can that be?*

A: Sankara was criticised for his views on *maya* without being understood. He said that

(1) *Brahman* is real,
(2) the universe is unreal, and
(3) The universe is *Brahman.*

He did not stop at the second, because the third explains the other two. It signifies that the universe is real if perceived as the Self, and unreal if perceived apart from the Self. Hence *maya* and reality are one and the same.[11]

Q: *So the world is not really illusory?*

A: At the level of the spiritual seeker you have got to say that the world is an illusion. There is no other way. When a man forgets that he is *Brahman*, who is real, permanent and omnipresent, and deludes himself into thinking that he is a body in the universe which is filled with bodies that are transitory, and labours under that delusion, you have got to remind him that the world is unreal and a delusion. Why? Because his vision which has forgotten its own Self is dwelling in the external, material universe. It will not turn inwards into introspection unless you impress on him that all this external, material universe is unreal. When once he realises his own Self he will know that there is nothing other than his own Self and he will come to look upon the whole universe as *Brahman*. There is no universe without the Self. So long as a man does not see the Self which is the origin of all, but looks only at the external world as real and permanent, you have to tell him that all this external universe is an illusion. You cannot help it. Take a paper. We see only the script, and nobody notices the paper on which the script is written. The paper is there whether the script on it is there or not. To those who look upon the script as real, you have to say that it is unreal, an illusion, since it rests upon the paper. The wise man looks upon both the paper and script as one. So also with *Brahman* and the universe.[12]

Q: *So the world is real when it is experienced as the Self and unreal when it is seen as separate names and forms?*

A: Just as fire is obscured by smoke, the shining light of consciousness is obscured by the assemblage of names and forms,

the world. When by compassionate divine grace the mind becomes clear, the nature of the world will be known to be not the illusory forms but only the reality.

Only those people whose minds are devoid of the evil power of *maya*, having given up the knowledge of the world and being unattached to it, and having thereby attained the knowledge of the self-shining supreme reality, can correctly know the meaning of the statement 'The world is real.' If one's outlook has been transformed to the nature of real knowledge, the world of the five elements beginning with ether [*akasa*] will be real, being the supreme reality, which is the nature of knowledge.

The original state of this empty world, which is bewildering and crowded with many names and forms, is bliss, which is one, just as the egg-yolk of a multi-coloured peacock is only one. Know this truth by abiding in the state of Self.[13]

Q: *I cannot say it is all clear to me. Is the world that is seen, felt and sensed by us in so many ways something like a dream, an illusion?*

A: There is no alternative for you but to accept the world as unreal if you are seeking the truth and the truth alone.

Q: *Why so?*

A: For the simple reason that unless you give up the idea that the world is real your mind will always be after it. If you take the appearance to be real you will never know the real itself, although it is the real alone that exists. This point is illustrated by the analogy of the snake in the rope. You may be deceived into believing that a piece of rope is a snake. While you imagine that the rope is a snake you cannot see the rope as a rope. The non-existent snake becomes real to you, while the real rope seems wholly non-existent as such.

Q: *It is easy to accept tentatively that the world is not ultimately real, but it is hard to have the conviction that it is really unreal.*

A: Even so is your dream world real while you are dreaming. So long as the dream lasts everything you see and feel in it is real.

Q: *Is then the world no better than a dream?*

A: What is wrong with the sense of reality you have while you are dreaming? You may be dreaming of something quite impossible, for instance, of having a happy chat with a dead person. Just for a moment, you may doubt in the dream, saying to yourself, 'Was he not dead?', but somehow your mind reconciles

itself to the dream-vision, and the person is as good as alive for the purposes of the dream. In other words, the dream as a dream does not permit you to doubt its reality. It is the same in the waking state, for you are unable to doubt the reality of the world which you see while you are awake. How can the mind which has itself created the world accept it as unreal? That is the significance of the comparison made between the world of the waking state and the dream world. Both are creations of the mind and, so long as the mind is engrossed in either, it finds itself unable to deny their reality. It cannot deny the reality of the dream world while it is dreaming and it cannot deny the reality of the waking world while it is awake. If, on the contrary, you withdraw your mind completely from the world and turn it within and abide there, that is, if you keep awake always to the Self which is the substratum of all experiences, you will find the world of which you are now aware is just as unreal as the world in which you lived in your dream.

Q: *We see, feel and sense the world in so many ways. These sensations are the reactions to the objects seen and felt. They are not mental creations as in dreams, which differ not only from person to person but also with regard to the same person. Is that not enough to prove the objective reality of the world?*

A: All this talk about inconsistencies in the dream-world arises only now, when you are awake. While you are dreaming, the dream was a perfectly integrated whole. That is to say, if you felt thirsty in a dream, the illusory drinking of illusory water quenched your illusory thirst. But all this was real and not illusory to you so long as you did not know that the dream itself was illusory. Similarly with the waking world. The sensations you now have get co-ordinated to give you the impression that the world is real.

If, on the contrary, the world is a self-existent reality (that is what you evidently mean by its objectivity), what prevents the world from revealing itself to you in sleep? You do not say you did not exist in your sleep.

Q: *Neither do I deny the world's existence while I am asleep. It has been existing all the while. If during my sleep I did not see it, others who were not sleeping saw it.*

A: To say you existed while asleep, was it necessary to call in the evidence of others so as to prove it to you? Why do you seek their evidence now? Those others can tell you of having seen the world during your sleep only when you yourself are awake. With

regard to your own existence it is different. On waking up you say you had a sound sleep, and so to that extent you are aware of yourself in the deepest sleep, whereas you have not the slightest notion of the world's existence then. Even now, while you are awake, is it the world that says 'I am real', or is it you?

Q: *Of course I say it, but I say it of the world.*

A: Well then, that world, which you say is real, is really mocking at you for seeking to prove its reality while of your own reality you are ignorant.

You want somehow or other to maintain that the world is real. What is the standard of reality? That alone is real which exists by itself, which reveals itself by itself and which is eternal and unchanging.

Does the world exist by itself? Was it ever seen without the aid of the mind? In sleep there is neither mind nor world. When awake there is the mind and there is the world. What does this invariable concomitance mean? You are familiar with the principles of inductive logic which are considered the very basis of scientific investigation. Why do you not decide this question of the reality of the world in the light of those accepted principles of logic?

Of yourself you can say 'I exist'. That is, your existence is not mere existence, it is existence of which you are conscious. Really, it is existence identical with consciousness.

Q: *The world may not be conscious of itself, yet it exists.*

A: Consciousness is always Self-consciousness. If you are conscious of anything you are essentially conscious of yourself. Unself-conscious existence is a contradiction in terms. It is no existence at all. It is merely attributed existence, whereas true existence, the *sat*, is not an attribute, it is the substance itself. It is the *vastu* [reality]. Reality is therefore known as *sat-chit*, being-consciousness, and never merely the one to the exclusion of the other. The world neither exists by itself, nor is it conscious of its existence. How can you say that such a world is real?

And what is the nature of the world? It is perpetual change, a continuous, interminable flux. A dependent, unself-conscious, ever-changing world cannot be real.[14]

Q: *Are the names and forms of the world real?*

A: You won't find them separate from the substratum [*adhishtana*]. When you try to get at name and form, you will find reality only. Therefore attain the knowledge of that which is real for all time.

Q: *Why does the waking state look so real?*

A: We see so much on the cinema screen, but it is not real. Nothing is real there except the screen. In the same way in the waking state, there is nothing but *adhishtana*. Knowledge of the world is knowledge of the knower of the world [*jagrat-prama* is the *prama* of *jagrat-pramata*]. Both go away in sleep.

Q: *Why do we see such permanency and constancy in the world?*

A: It is seen on account of wrong ideas. When someone says that he took a bath in the same river twice he is wrong, because when he bathed for the second time the river is not the same as it was when he bathed for the first time. On looking twice at the brightness of a flame a man says that he sees the same flame, but this flame is changing every moment. The waking state is like this. The stationary appearance is an error of perception.

Q: *Where is the error?*

A: *Pramata* [the knower].

Q: *How did the knower come?*

A: On account of the error of perception. In fact the knower and his misperceptions appear simultaneously, and when the knowledge of the Self is obtained, they disappear simultaneously.

Q: *From where did the knower and his misperceptions come?*

A: Who is asking the question?

Q: *I am.*

A: Find out that 'I' and all your doubts will be solved. Just as in a dream a false knowledge, knower and known rise up, in the waking state the same process operates. In both states on knowing this 'I' you know everything and nothing remains to be known. In deep sleep, knower, knowledge and known are absent. In the same way, at the time of experiencing the real 'I' they will not exist. Whatever you see happening in the waking state happens only to the knower, and since the knower is unreal, nothing in fact ever happens.[15]

Q: *Is the light which gives the 'I'-sense identity and knowledge of the world ignorance or* chit, *consciousness?*

A: It is only the reflected light of *chit* that makes the 'I' believe itself different from others. This reflected light of *chit* also makes the 'I' create objects, but for this reflection there must be a surface on which the reflection takes place.

Q: *What is that surface?*

A: On realisation of the Self you will find that the reflection

and the surface on which it takes place do not actually exist, but that both of them are one and the same *chit*. There is the world, which requires location for its existence and light to make it perceptible. Both rise simultaneously. Therefore physical existence and perception depend upon the light of the mind which is reflected from the Self. Just as cinema pictures can be made visible by a reflected light, and only in darkness, so also the world pictures are perceptible only by the light of the Self reflected in the darkness of *avidya* [ignorance]. The world can be seen neither in the utter darkness of ignorance, as in deep sleep, nor in the utter light of the Self, as in Self-realisation or *samadhi*.[16]

CHAPTER 18
Reincarnation

Most religions have constructed elaborate theories which purport to explain what happens to the individual soul after the death of the body. Some claim that the soul goes to heaven or hell while others claim that it is reincarnated in a new body.

Sri Ramana taught that all such theories are based on the false assumption that the individual self or soul is real; once this illusion is seen through, the whole superstructure of after-life theories collapses. From the standpoint of the Self, there is no birth or death, no heaven or hell, and no reincarnation.

As a concession to those who were unable to assimilate the implications of this truth, Sri Ramana would sometimes admit that reincarnation existed. In replying to such people he would say that if one imagined that the individual self was real, then that imaginary self would persist after death and that eventually it would identify with a new body and a new life. The whole process, he said, is sustained by the tendency of the mind to identify itself with a body. Once the limiting illusion of mind is transcended, identification with the body ceases, and all theories about death and reincarnation are found to be inapplicable.

Q: *Is reincarnation true?*

A: Reincarnation exists only so long as there is ignorance. There is really no reincarnation at all, either now or before. Nor will there be any hereafter. This is the truth.

Q: *Can a yogi know his past lives?*

A: Do you know the present life that you wish to know the past? Find the present, then the rest will follow. Even with our present limited knowledge, you suffer so much. Why should you burden yourself with more knowledge? Is it to suffer more?[1]

When seen through the sight of the supreme space of Self, the illusion of taking birth in this mirage-like false world is found to be nothing but the egotistical ignorance of identifying a body as

'I'. Among those whose minds are possessed with forgetfulness of Self, those who are born will die and those who die will be born again. But know that those whose minds are dead, having known the glorious supreme reality, will remain only there in that elevated state of reality, devoid of both birth and death. Forgetting Self, mistaking the body for Self, taking innumerable births, and at last knowing Self and being Self is just like waking from a dream of wandering all over the world.[2]

Q: *How long does it take a man to be reborn after death? Is it immediately after death or some time after?*

A: You do not know what you were before birth, yet you want to know what you will be after death. Do you know what you are now?

Birth and rebirth pertain to the body. You are identifying the Self with the body. It is a wrong identification. You believe that the body has been born and will die, and confound the phenomena relating to the body with the Self. Know your real being and these questions will not arise.

Birth and rebirth are mentioned only to make you investigate the question and find out that there are neither births nor rebirths. They relate to the body and not to the Self. Know the Self and don't be perturbed by doubts.[3]

Q: *Do not one's actions affect the person in later births?*

A: Are you born now? Why do you think of other births? The fact is that there is neither birth nor death. Let him who is born think of death and palliatives for it.[4]

Q: *What happens to a person after death?*

A: Engage yourself in the living present. The future will take care of itself. Do not worry about the future. The state before creation and the process of creation are dealt with in the scriptures in order that you may know the present. Because you say you are born, therefore they say, yes, and add that God created you.

But do you see God or anything else in your sleep? If God is real, why does he not shine forth in your sleep also? You always are, you are the same now as you were in sleep. You are not different from that one in sleep. But why should there be differences in the feelings or experiences of the two states?

Did you ask, while asleep, questions regarding your birth? Did you then ask 'Where do I go after death?' Why think of all these questions now in the waking state? Let what is born think of its birth and the remedy, its cause and ultimate results.[5]

Q: *What becomes of the* jiva *[individual] after death?*

A: The question is not appropriate for a *jiva* now living. A dead *jiva* may ask me, if he wishes to. In the meantime let the embodied *jiva* solve its present problem and find who he is. Then there will be an end of such doubts.[6]

Q: *Is the Buddhist view, that there is no continuous entity answering to the ideas of the individual soul, correct or not? Is this consistent with the Hindu notion of a reincarnating ego? Is the soul a continuous entity which reincarnates again and again, according to the Hindu doctrine, or is it a mere mass of mental tendencies* – samskaras?

A: The real Self is continuous and unaffected. The reincarnating ego belongs to the lower plane, namely, thought. It is transcended by Self-realisation.

Reincarnations are due to a spurious offshoot. Therefore they are denied by the Buddhists. The present state of ignorance is due to the identification of consciousness [*chit*] with the insentient [*jada*] body.[7]

Q: *Do not we go to heaven* [svarga] *as the result of our actions?*

A: That is as true as the present existence. But if we enquire who we are and discover the Self, what need is there to think of heaven?

Q: *Should I not try to escape rebirth?*

A: Yes. Find out who is born and who now has the trouble of existence. When you are asleep do you think of rebirths or even the present existence? So find out from where the present problem arises and in that place you will find the solution. You will discover that there is no birth, no present trouble or unhappiness. The Self is all and all is bliss. Even now we are free from rebirth so why fret over the misery of it?[8]

Q: *Is there rebirth?*

A: Do you know what birth is?

Q: *Oh yes, I know that I exist now, but I want to know if I'll exist in the future.*

A: Past! . . . Present! . . . Future! . . .

Q: *Yes, today is the result of yesterday, the past, and tomorrow, the future, will be the result of today, the present. Am I right?*

A: There is neither past nor future. There is only the present. Yesterday was the present to you when you experienced it, and

tomorrow will be also the present when you experience it. Therefore, experience takes place only in the present, and beyond experience nothing exists.

Q: *Are then past and future mere imagination?*

A: Yes, even the present is mere imagination, for the sense of time is purely mental. Space is similarly mental. Therefore birth and rebirth, which take place in time and space, cannot be other than imagination.[9]

Q: *What is the cause of* tanha, *the thirst for life and the thirst for rebirth?*

A: Real rebirth is dying from the ego into the spirit. This is the significance of the crucifixion of Jesus. Whenever identification with the body exists, a body is always available, whether this or any other one, till the body-sense disappears by merging into the source – the spirit, or Self. The stone which is projected upwards remains in constant motion till it returns to its source, the earth, and rests. Headache continues to give trouble, till the pre-headache state is regained.

Thirst for life is inherent in the very nature of life, which is absolute existence – *sat*. Although indestructible by nature, by false identification with its destructible instrument, the body, consciousness imbibes a false apprehension of its destructibility. Because of that false identification it tries to perpetuate the body, and that results in a succession of births. But however long these bodies may last, they eventually come to an end and yield to the Self, which alone eternally exists.

Q: *Yes, 'Give up thy life if thou wouldst live', says the* Voice of the Silence *of H.P. Blavatsky.*

A: Give up the false identification and remember, the body cannot exist without the Self, whereas the Self can exist without the body. In fact it is always without it.

Q: *A doubt has just now arisen in a friend of mine's mind. She has just heard that a human being may take an animal birth in some other life, which is contrary to what Theosophy has taught her.*

A: Let him who takes birth ask this question. Find out first who it is that is born, and whether there is actual birth and death. You will find that birth pertains to the ego, which is an illusion of the mind.[10]

Q: *Is it possible for a man to be reborn as a lower animal?*

A: Yes. It is possible, as illustrated by Jada Bharata – the scriptural anecdote of a royal sage having been reborn as a deer.

Q: *Is the individual capable of spiritual progress in an animal body?*

A: Not impossible, though it is exceedingly rare.[11] It is not true that birth as a man is necessarily the highest, and that one must attain realisation only from being a man. Even an animal can attain Self-realisation.[12]

Q: *Theosophy speaks of fifty to 10,000 year intervals between death and rebirth. Why is this so?*

A: There is no relation between the standard of measurements of one state of consciousness and another. All such measurements are hypothetical. It is true that some individuals take more time and some less. But it must be distinctly understood that it is no soul which comes and goes, but only the thinking mind of the individual, which makes it appear to do so. On whatever plane the mind happens to act, it creates a body for itself; in the physical world a physical body and in the dream world a dream body which becomes wet with dream rain and sick with dream disease. After the death of the physical body, the mind remains inactive for some time, as in dreamless sleep when it remains worldless and therefore bodiless. But soon it becomes active again in a new world and a new body – the astral – till it assumes another body in what is called a 'rebirth'. But the *jnani*, the Self-realised man, whose mind has already ceased to act, remains unaffected by death. The mind of the *jnani* has ceased to exist; it has dropped never to rise again to cause births and deaths. The chain of illusions has snapped for ever for him.

It should now be clear that there is neither real birth, nor real death. It is the mind which creates and maintains the illusion of reality in this process, till it is destroyed by Self-realisation.[13]

Q: *Does not death dissolve the individuality of a person, so that there can be no rebirth, just as the rivers discharged into the ocean lose their individualities?*

A: But when the waters evaporate and return as rain on the hills, they once more flow in the form of rivers and fall into the ocean. So also the individualities during sleep lose their separateness and yet return as individuals according to their *samskaras* or past tendencies. It is the same after death – the individuality of the person with *samskaras* is not lost.

Q: *How can that be?*

A: See how a tree whose branches have been cut grows again.

So long as the roots of the tree remain unimpaired, the tree will continue to grow. Similarly, the *samskaras* which have merely sunk in the Heart on death, but have not perished for that reason, occasion rebirth at the right time. That is how *jivas* [individuals] are reborn.

Q: *How could the innumerable* jivas *and the wide universe which they produce sprout up from such subtle* samskaras *sunk in the Heart?*

A: Just as the big banyan tree sprouts from a tiny seed, so do the *jivas* and the whole universe with name and form sprout up from the subtle *samskaras.*[14]

Q: *How does the* jiva *transfer from one body to another?*

A: When one begins to die, hard breathing sets in; that means that one has become unconscious of the dying body. The mind at once takes hold of another body, and it swings to and fro between the two, until attachment is fully transferred to the new body. Meanwhile there are occasional violent breaths, and that means that the mind swings back to the dying body. The transitional state of the mind is somewhat like a dream.[15]

Q: *How long is the interval between one's death and reincarnation?*

A: It may be long or short. But a *jnani* does not undergo any such changes; he merges into the universal being.

Some say that those who after death pass into the path of light are not reborn, whereas those who after death take the path of darkness are reborn after they have enjoyed the fruits of *karma* in their subtle bodies.

Some say that if one's merits and demerits are equal, they are directly reborn here. Merits outweighing demerits, the subtle bodies go to heaven and are then reborn here; demerits outweighing merits, they go to hells and are afterwards reborn here.

A *Yogabrashta* [one who has slipped from the path of yoga] is said to fare in the same manner. All these are described in the *sastras.* But in fact, there is neither birth nor death. One remains only as what one really is. This is the only truth.[16]

Q: *I find this very confusing. Are both births and rebirths ultimately unreal?*

A: If there is birth there must be not only one rebirth but a whole succession of births. Why and how did you get this birth? For the same reason and in the same manner you must have

succeeding births. But if you ask who has the birth and whether birth and death are for you or for somebody distinct from you, then you realise the truth and the truth burns up all *karmas* and frees you from all births. The books graphically describe how all *sanchita karma* [*karma* accumulated from previous births], which would take countless lives to exhaust, is burnt up by one little spark of *jnana,* just as a mountain of gunpowder will be blown up by a single spark of fire. It is the ego that is the cause of all the world and of the countless sciences whose researches are so great as to baffle description, and if the ego is dissolved by enquiry all this immediately crumbles and the reality or Self alone remains.[17]

Q: *Do you mean to say that I was never even born?*

A: Yes, you are now thinking that you are the body and therefore confuse yourself with its birth and death. But you are not the body and you have no birth and death.

Q: *So you do not uphold the theory of rebirth?*

A: No. On the other hand I want to remove your confusion that you will be reborn. It is you who think that you will be reborn.

See for whom the question arises. Unless the questioner is found, such questions can never finally be answered.[18]

CHAPTER 19
The nature of God

At first sight, Sri Ramana's statements on God appear to be riddled with contradictions: on one occasion he might say that God never does anything, on another that nothing happens except by his will. Sometimes he would say that God is just an idea in the mind, while at other times he would say that God is the only existing reality.

These contradictory statements are largely a reflection of the differing levels of understanding he encountered in his questioners. Those who worshipped personal Gods would often be given anthropomorphic explanations. They would be told that God created the world, that he sustains it by his divine power, that he looks after the needs of all its inhabitants and that nothing happens that is contrary to his will. On the other hand, those who were not attracted to such a theory would be told that all such ideas about God and his power were mental creations which only obscured the real experience of God which is inherent in everyone.

At the highest level of his teachings the terms 'God' and 'Self' are synonyms for the immanent reality which is discovered by Self-realisation. Thus realisation of the Self is realisation of God; it is not an experience *of* God, rather it is an understanding that one *is* God. Speaking from this ultimate level, Sri Ramana's statements on God can be summarised in the following way:

1 He is immanent and formless; he is pure being and pure consciousness.
2 Manifestation appears in him and through his power, but he is not its creator. God never acts, he just is. He has neither will nor desire.
3 Individuality is the illusion that we are not identical with God; when the illusion is dispelled, what remains is God.

On a lower level he spoke about *Iswara*, the Hindu name for the supreme personal God. He said that *Iswara* exists as a real entity only so long as one imagines that one is an individual

person. When individuality persists there is a God who supervises the activities of the universe; in the absence of individuality *Iswara* is non-existent.

Besides *Iswara*, Hinduism has many deities which resemble the gods and demons of Norse and Greek mythology. Such deities are a central feature of popular Hinduism and their reality is still widely accepted. Sri Ramana surprised many people by saying that such beings were as real as the people who believed in them. He admitted that after realisation they shared the same fate as *Iswara*, but prior to that, he seemed to regard them as senior officials in a cosmological hierarchy which looked after the affairs of the world.

Q: *God is described as manifest and unmanifest. As the former he is said to include the world as a part of his being. If that is so, we as part of that world should have easily known him in the manifested form.*

A: Know yourself before you seek to decide about the nature of God and the world.

Q: *Does knowing myself imply knowing God?*

A: Yes, God is within you.

Q: *Then, what stands in the way of my knowing myself or God?*

A: Your wandering mind and perverted ways.

Q: *Is God personal?*

A: Yes, he is always the first person, the I, ever standing before you. Because you give precedence to worldly things, God appears to have receded to the background. If you give up all else and seek him alone, he alone will remain as the 'I', the Self.[1]

Q: *Is God apart from the Self?*

A: The Self is God. 'I am' is God. This question arises because you are holding on to the ego self. It will not arise if you hold onto the true Self. For the real Self will not and cannot ask anything. If God be apart from the Self he must be a Self-less God, which is absurd.[2] God, who seems to be non-existent, alone truly exists, whereas the individual, who seems to be existing, is ever non-existent. Sages say that the state in which one thus knows one's own non-existence [*sunya*] alone is the glorious supreme knowledge.[3]

You now think that you are an individual, that there is the

universe and that God is beyond the cosmos. So there is the idea of separateness. This idea must go. For God is not separate from you or the cosmos. The *Gita* also says:

> The Self am I, O Lord of Sleep,
> In every creature's heart enshrined.
> The rise and noon of every form,
> I am its final doom as well (*Bhagavad Gita*, X.20).

Thus God is not only in the heart of all, he is the prop of all, he is the source of all, their abiding place and their end. All proceed from him, have their stay in him, and finally resolve into him. Therefore he is not separate.

Q: *How are we to understand this passage in the* Gita*: 'This whole cosmos forms a particle of me'?*

A: It does not mean that a small particle of God separates from him and forms the universe. His *sakti* [power] is acting. As a result of one phase of such activity the cosmos has become manifest. Similarly, the statement in *Purusha Sukta*, 'All the beings form his one foot', does not mean that *Brahman* is in several parts.

Q: *I understand that.* Brahman *is certainly not divisible.*

A: So the fact is that *Brahman* is all and remains indivisible. It is ever realised but man is not aware of this. He must come to know this. Knowledge means the overcoming of obstacles which obstruct the revelation of the eternal truth that the Self is the same as *Brahman*. The obstacles taken together form your idea of separateness as an individual.[4]

Q: *Is God the same as Self?*

A: The Self is known to everyone, but not clearly. You always exist. The be-ing is the Self. 'I am' is the name of God. Of all the definitions of God, none is indeed so well put as the Biblical statement 'I am that I am' in Exodus 3. There are other statements, such as *Brahmaivaham* [*Brahman* am I], *aham Brahmasmi* [I am *Brahman*] and *soham* [I am he]. But none is so direct as the name Jehovah which means 'I am'. The absolute being is what is. It is the Self. It is God. Knowing the Self, God is known. In fact God is none other than the Self.[5]

Q: *God seems to be known by many different names. Are any of them justified?*

A: Among the many thousands of names of God, no name suits God, who abides in the Heart, devoid of thought, so truly,

aptly, and beautifully as the name 'I' or 'I am'. Of all the known names of God, the name of God 'I' – 'I' alone will resound triumphantly when the ego is destroyed, rising as the silent supreme word [*mouna-para-vak*] in the Heart-space of those whose attention is Selfward-facing. Even if one unceasingly meditates upon that name 'I-I' with one's attention on the feeling 'I', it will take one and plunge one into the source from which thought rises, destroying the ego, the embryo, which is joined to the body.[6]

Q: *What is the relationship between God and the world? Is he the creator or sustainer of it?*

A: Sentient and insentient beings of all kinds are performing actions only by the mere presence of the sun, which rises in the sky without any volition. Similarly all actions are done by the Lord without any volition or desire on his part. In the mere presence of the sun, the magnifying lens emits fire, the lotus-bud blossoms, the water-lily closes and all the countless creatures perform actions and rest.

The order of the great multitude of worlds is maintained by the mere presence of God in the same manner as the needle moves in front of a magnet, and as the moonstone emits water, the water-lily blossoms and the lotus closes in front of the moon.

In the mere presence of God, who does not have even the least volition, the living beings, who are engaged in innumerable activities, after embarking upon many paths to which they are drawn according to the course determined by their own *karmas*, finally realise the futility of action, turn back to Self and attain liberation.

The actions of living beings certainly do not go and affect God, who transcends the mind, in the same manner as the activities of the world do not affect that sun and as the qualities of the conspicuous four elements [earth, water, fire and air] do not affect the limitless space.[7]

Q: *Why is* samsara *– creation and manifestation as finitised – so full of sorrow and evil?*

A: God's will!

Q: *Why does God will it so?*

A: It is inscrutable. No motive can be attributed to that power – no desire, no end to achieve can be asserted of that one infinite, all-wise and all-powerful being. God is untouched by activities, which take place in his presence. Compare the sun and the world

activities. There is no meaning in attributing responsibility and motive to the one before it becomes many.[8]

Q: *Does everything happen by the will of God?*

A: It is not possible for anyone to do anything opposed to the ordinance of God, who has the ability to do everything. Therefore to remain silent at the feet of God, having given up all the anxieties of the wicked, defective and delusive mind, is best.[9]

Q: *Is there a separate being* Iswara *[personal God] who is the rewarder of virtue and punisher of sins? Is there a God?*

A: Yes.

Q: *What is he like?*

A: *Iswara* has individuality in mind and body, which are perishable, but at the same time he has also the transcendental consciousness and liberation inwardly.

Iswara, the personal God, the supreme creator of the universe really does exist. But this is true only from the relative standpoint of those who have not realised the truth, those people who believe in the reality of individual souls. From the absolute standpoint the sage cannot accept any other existence than the impersonal Self, one and formless.

Iswara has a physical body, a form and a name, but it is not so gross as this material body. It can be seen in visions in the form created by the devotee. The forms and names of God are many and various and differ with each religion. His essence is the same as ours, the real Self being only one and without form. Hence forms he assumes are only creations or appearances.

Iswara is immanent in every person and every object throughout the universe. The totality of all things and beings constitutes God. There is a power out of which a small fraction has become all this universe, and the remainder is in reserve. Both this reserve power plus the manifested power as material world together constitute *Iswara*.[10]

Q: *So ultimately* Iswara *is not real?*

A: Existence of *Iswara* follows from our conception of *Iswara*. Let us first know whose concept he is. The concept will be only according to the one who conceives. Find out who you are and the other problems will solve themselves.[11]

Iswara, God, the creator, the personal God, is the last of the unreal forms to go. Only the absolute being is real. Hence, not only the world, not only the ego, but also the personal God are of unreality. We must find the absolute – nothing less.[12]

Q: *You say that even the highest God is still only an idea. Does that mean that there is no God?*

A: No, there is an *Iswara*.[13]

Q: *Does he exist in any particular place or form?*

A: If the individual is a form, even Self, the source, who is the Lord, will also appear to be a form. If one is not a form, since there then cannot be knowledge of other things, will that statement that God has a form be correct? God assumes any form imagined by the devotee through repeated thinking in prolonged meditation. Though he thus assumes endless names, the real formless consciousness alone is God.

With regard to his location, God does not reside in any place other than the Heart. It is due to illusion, caused by the ego, the 'I am the body' idea, that the kingdom of God is conceived to be elsewhere. Be sure that the Heart is the kingdom of God.

Know that you are the perfect, shining light which not only makes the existence of God's kingdom possible, but also allows it to be seen as some wonderful heaven. To know this is alone *jnana*. Therefore, the kingdom of God is within you. The unlimited space of *turiyatita* [beyond the four states, i.e. the Self], which shines suddenly, in all its fullness, within the Heart of a highly mature aspirant during the state of complete absorption of mind, as if a fresh and previously unknown experience, is the rarely-attained and true *Siva-loka* [the kingdom of God], which shines by the light of Self.[14]

Q: *They say that the* jiva *[individual] is subject to the evil effects of illusion such as limited vision and knowledge, whereas* Iswara *has all-pervading vision and knowledge. It is also said that* jiva *and* Iswara *become identical if the individual discards his limited vision and knowledge. Should not* Iswara *also discard his particular characteristics such as all-pervading vision and knowledge? They too are illusions, aren't they?*

A: Is that your doubt? First discard your own limited vision and then there will be time enough to think of *Iswara*'s all-pervading vision and knowledge. First get rid of your own limited knowledge. Why do you worry about *Iswara*? He will look after himself. Has he not got as much capacity as we have? Why should we worry about whether he possesses all-pervading vision and knowledge or not? It is indeed a great thing if we can take care of ourselves.[15]

Q: *But does God know everything?*

A: The *Vedas* declare God to be omniscient only to those who ignorantly think themselves to be people of little knowledge. But if one attains and knows him as he really is, it will be found that God does not know anything, because his nature is the ever-real whole, other than which nothing exists to be known.[16]

Q: *Why do religions speak of Gods, heaven, hell, etc.?*

A: Only to make the people realise that they are on a par with this world and that the Self alone is real. The religions are according to the view-point of the seeker.[17]

Q: *Do Vishnu, Siva, etc., exist?*

A: Individual human souls are not the only beings known.[18]

Q: *And their sacred regions* Kailasa *or* Vaikuntha, *are they real?*

A: As real as you are in this body.

Q: *Do they possess a phenomenal existence, like my body? Or are they fictions like the horn of a hare?*

A: They do exist.

Q: *If so, they must be somewhere. Where are they?*

A: Persons who have seen them say that they exist somewhere. So we must accept their statement.

Q: *Where do they exist?*

A: In you.

Q: *Then it is only an idea which I can create and control?*

A: Everything is like that.

Q: *But I can create pure fictions, for example, a hare's horn, or only part truths, for example a mirage, while there are also facts irrespective of my imagination. Do the Gods* Iswara *or Vishnu exist like that?*

A: Yes.

Q: *Is God subject to* pralaya[19] *[cosmic dissolution]?*

A: Why? Man becoming aware of the Self transcends cosmic dissolution and becomes liberated. Why not *Iswara* who is infinitely wiser and abler?

Q: *Do* devas *[angels] and* pisachas *[devils] exist similarly?*

A: Yes.[20]

Q: *These deities, what is their status relative to the Self?*

A: Siva, Ganapati and other deities like Brahma, exist from a human standpoint; that is to say, if you consider your personal self as real, then they also exist. Just as a government has its high executive officers to carry on the government, so has the creator. But from the standpoint of the Self all these gods are illusory and must themselves merge into the one reality.[21]

Q: *Whenever I worship God with name and form, I feel tempted to think whether I am not wrong in doing so, as that would be limiting the limitless, giving form to the formless. At the same time I feel I am not constant in my adherence to worship God without form.*

A: As long as you respond to a name, what objection could there be to your worshipping a God with name or form? Worship God with or without form till you know who you are.[22]

Q: *I find it difficult to believe in a personal God. In fact I find it impossible. But I can believe in an impersonal God, a divine force which rules and guides the world, and it would be a great help to me, even in my work of healing, if this faith were increased. May I know how to increase this faith?*

A: Faith is in things unknown, but the Self is self-evident. Even the greatest egotist cannot deny his own existence, that is to say, cannot deny the Self. You can call the ultimate reality by whatever name you like and say that you have faith in it or love for it, but who is there who will not have faith in his own existence or love for himself? That is because faith and love are our real nature.[23]

Q: *Should I not have any idea about God?*

A: Only so long as there are other thoughts in the Heart can there be a thought of God conceived by one's mind. The destruction of even that thought of God due to the destruction of all other thoughts alone is the unthought thought, which is the true thought of God.[24]

CHAPTER 20
Suffering and morality

The paradoxes inherent in theistic theories have engaged the minds of western theologians and philosophers for centuries. For example, if God is perfect, why is there evil in the world? Why does an omnipotent God allow suffering when he has the power to abolish it at a stroke?

Sri Ramana side-steps such conundrums by stating that the world, God and the individual who suffers are all inventions of the mind.

> All religions first postulate three principles, the world, the soul and God. To say that one principle alone appears as the three principles or that the three principles are always three principles is possible only as long as the ego exists.[1]

Instead of attributing suffering to the consequence of wrong actions or to the will of God, Sri Ramana taught that it only arises because we imagine that we are separate individuals interacting with each other and with the world. He said that wrong actions compound the suffering, and are therefore to be avoided, but they are not its original cause. It is the mind that creates the illusion of separateness and it is the mind that suffers the consequences of its illusory inventions. Suffering is thus a product and consequence of the discriminative mind; when the mind is eliminated, suffering is found to be non-existent.

Many questioners could relate to this idea on an individual level but they found it hard to accept that all the suffering in the world existed only in the mind of the person who perceived it. Sri Ramana was quite adamant about this and he repeatedly said that if one realises the Self one will know that all suffering, not just one's own, is non-existent. Taking this idea to its logical conclusion, Sri Ramana often said the most effective way of eliminating other people's suffering was to realise the Self.

This standpoint should not be interpreted to mean that Sri Ramana encouraged his followers to ignore the suffering of other

people. On a more pragmatic level he said that prior to Self-realisation one should accept the reality of other people's suffering and take steps to relieve it whenever one comes across it. However, he also pointed out that such remedial actions would only be spiritually beneficial if they were done without the feeling that 'other people less fortunate than me are being helped' and without the feeling that 'I am performing these actions'.

On the whole, the question of what one should or should not do in the world was of little interest to Sri Ramana. He maintained the view that all conventional ideas about right and wrong were value-judgments made by the mind, and that when the mind ceases to exist, ideas about right and wrong also cease. Because of this he rarely spoke about the conventional canons of morality, and whenever he was pressed to offer an opinion on them, he would usually side-step the issue by saying that the only 'right action' was discovering the Self.

Q: *What do you consider to be the cause of world suffering? And how can we help to change it, (a) as individuals, or (b) collectively?*

A: Realise the real Self. It is all that is necessary.[2]

Q: *In this life beset with limitations can I ever realise the bliss of the Self?*

A: That bliss of the Self is always with you, and you will find it for yourself, if you would seek it earnestly. The cause of your misery is not in the life outside you, it is in you as the ego. You impose limitations on yourself and then make a vain struggle to transcend them. All unhappiness is due to the ego; with it comes all your trouble. What does it avail you to attribute to the happenings in life the cause of misery which is really within you? What happiness can you get from things extraneous to yourself? When you get it, how long will it last?

If you would deny the ego and scorch it by ignoring it, you would be free. If you accept it, it will impose limitations on you and throw you into a vain struggle to transcend them. To be the Self that you really are is the only means to realise the bliss that is ever yours.[3]

Q: *If truly there is neither bondage nor liberation, what is the reason for the actual experience of joys and sorrows?*

A: They appear to be real only when one turns aside from one's real nature. They do not really exist.[4]

Q: *Is the world created for happiness or misery?*

A: Creation is neither good nor bad; it is as it is. It is the human mind which puts all sorts of constructions on it, seeing things from its own angle and interpreting them to suit its own interests. A woman is just a woman, but one mind calls her 'mother', another 'sister', and still another 'aunt' and so on. Men love women, hate snakes, and are indifferent to the grass and stones by the roadside. These value-judgments are the cause of all the misery in the world. Creation is like a peepul tree: birds come to eat its fruit, or take shelter under its branches, men cool themselves in its shade, but some may hang themselves on it. Yet the tree continues to lead its quiet life, unconcerned with and unaware of all the uses it is put to. It is the human mind that creates its own difficulties and then cries for help. Is God so partial as to give peace to one person and sorrow to another? In creation there is room for everything, but man refuses to see the good, the healthy and the beautiful. Instead, he goes on whining, like the hungry man who sits beside the tasty dish and who, instead of stretching out his hand to satisfy his hunger, goes on lamenting, 'Whose fault is it, God's or man's?'[5]

Q: *If God is all why does the individual suffer for his actions? Are not the actions for which the individual is made to suffer prompted by him?*

A: He who thinks he is the doer is also the sufferer.

Q: *But the actions are prompted by God and the individual is only his tool.*

A: This logic is applied only when one suffers, but not when one rejoices. If the conviction prevails always, there will be no suffering either.

Q: *When will the suffering cease?*

A: Not until individuality is lost. If both the good and bad actions are his, why should you think that the enjoyment and suffering are yours alone? He who does good or bad, also enjoys pleasure or suffers pain. Leave it there and do not superimpose suffering on yourself.[6]

Q: *How can you say that suffering is non-existent? I see it everywhere.*

A: One's own reality, which shines within everyone as the Heart, is itself the ocean of unalloyed bliss. Therefore like the unreal blueness of the sky, misery does not exist in reality but only in mere imagination. Since one's own reality, which is the sun of *jnana* that cannot be approached by the dark delusion of ignorance, itself shines as happiness, misery is nothing but an illusion caused by the unreal sense of individuality. In truth no one has ever experienced any such thing other than that unreal illusion. If one scrutinises one's own Self, which is bliss, there will be no misery at all in one's life. One suffers because of the idea that the body, which is never oneself, is 'I'; suffering is all due to this delusion.[7]

Q: *I suffer in both mind and body. From the day of my birth I have never had happiness. My mother too suffered from the time she conceived me, I hear. Why do I suffer thus? I have not sinned in this life. Is all this due to the sins of past lives?*

A: You say the mind and body suffer. But do they ask the questions? Who is the questioner? Is it not the one that is beyond both mind and body? You say the body suffers in this life and ask if the cause of this is the previous life. If that is so then the cause of that life is the one before it, and so on. So, like the case of the seed and the sprout, there is no end to the causal series. It has to be said that all the lives have their first cause in ignorance. That same ignorance is present even now, framing this question. That ignorance must be removed by *jnana*.

'Why and to whom did this suffering come?' If you question thus you will find that the 'I' is separate from the mind and body, that the Self is the only eternal being, and that it is eternal bliss. That is *jnana*.[8]

Q: *I suffer from worries without end; there is no peace for me, though there is nothing wanting for me to be happy.*

A: Do these worries affect you in sleep?

Q: *No, they do not.*

A: Are you the very same man now, or are you different from him that slept without any worry?

Q: *Yes, I am the same person.*

A: Then surely those worries do not belong to you. It is your own fault if you assume that they are yours.[9]

Q: *When we suffer grief and complain and appeal to you by letter or mentally by prayer, are you not moved to feel what a pity it is that your child suffers like this?*

A: If one felt like that one would not be a *jnani*.[10]

Q: *We see pain in the world. A man is hungry. It is a physical*

reality, and as such, it is very real to him. Are we to call it a dream and remain unmoved by his pain?

A: From the point of view of *jnana* or the reality, the pain you speak of is certainly a dream, as is the world of which the pain is an infinitesimal part. In the dream also you yourself feel hunger. You see others suffering hunger. You feed yourself and, moved by pity, feed the others that you find suffering from hunger. So long as the dream lasts, all those hunger pains are quite as real as you now think the pain you see in the world to be. It is only when you wake up that you discover that the pain in the dream was unreal. You might have eaten to the full and gone to sleep. You dream that you work hard and long in the hot sun all day, are tired and hungry and want to eat a lot. Then you get up and find your stomach is full and you have not stirred out of your bed. But all this is not to say that while you are in the dream you can act as if the pain you feel there is not real. The hunger in the dream has to be assuaged by the food in the dream. The fellow beings you found so hungry in the dream had to be provided with food in that dream. You can never mix up the two states, the dream and the waking state. Till you reach the state of *jnana* and thus wake out of this *maya*, you must do social service by relieving suffering whenever you see it. But even then you must do it, as we are told, without *ahamkara*, that is without the sense 'I am the doer', but feeling, 'I am the Lord's tool.' Similarly one must not be conceited and think, 'I am helping a man below me. He needs help. I am in a position to help. I am superior and he inferior.' You must help the man as a means of worshipping God in that man. All such service too is for you the Self, not for anybody else. You are not helping anybody else, but only yourself.[11]

Q: *In the case of persons who are not capable of long meditation, will it not be enough if they engage themselves in doing good to others?*

A: Yes, it will do. The idea of good will be in their heart. That is enough. Good, God, love, are all the same thing. If the person keeps continuously thinking of any one of these, it will be enough. All meditation is for the purpose of keeping out all other thoughts.[12]

Q: *So one should try to ameliorate suffering, even if one knows that ultimately it is non-existent?*

A: There never was and never will be a time when all are equally happy or rich or wise or healthy. In fact none of these terms has any meaning except in so far as the opposite to it exists. But that does not mean that when you come across anyone who is less happy or more miserable than yourself, you are not to be moved to compassion or to seek to relieve him as best you can. On the contrary, you must love all and help all, since only in that way can you help yourself. When you seek to reduce the suffering of any fellow man or fellow creature, whether your efforts succeed or not, you are yourself evolving spiritually especially if such service is rendered disinterestedly, not with the egotistic feeling 'I am doing this', but in the spirit 'God is making me the channel of this service; he is the doer and I am the instrument.'[13]

If one knows the truth that all that one gives to others is giving only to oneself, who indeed will not be a virtuous person and perform the kind act of giving to others? Since everyone is one's own Self, whoever does whatever to whomever is doing it only to himself.[14]

Q: *There are widespread disasters spreading havoc in the world, for example famine and pestilence. What is the cause of this state of affairs?*

A: To whom does all this appear?

Q: *That won't do. I see misery everywhere.*

A: You were not aware of the world and its sufferings in your sleep but you are conscious of them now in your waking state. Continue in that state in which you were not afflicted by them. That is to say, when you are not aware of the world, its sufferings do not affect you. When you remain as the Self, as in sleep, the world and its sufferings will not affect you. Therefore look within. See the Self! Then there will be an end of the world and its miseries.

Q: *But that is selfishness.*

A: The world is not external. Because you identify yourself wrongly with the body you see the world outside, and its pain becomes apparent to you. But they are not real. Seek the reality and get rid of this unreal feeling.

Q: *There are great men, public workers, who cannot solve the problem of the misery of the world.*

A: They are ego-centred and that accounts for their inability. If they remained in the Self they would be different.

Q: *Why do not* mahatmas *help?*

A: How do you know that they do not help? Public speeches, physical activity and material help are all outweighed by the

silence of *mahatmas*. They accomplish more than others.

Q: *What is to be done by us for ameliorating the condition of the world?*

A: If you remain free from pain, there will be no pain anywhere. The trouble now is due to your seeing the world externally and also thinking that there is pain there. But both the world and the pain are within you. If you look within there will be no pain.

Q: *God is perfect. Why did he create the world imperfect? The work shares the nature of the author. But here it is not so.*

A: Who is it that raises the question?

Q: *I – the individual.*

A: Are you apart from God that you ask this question?

So long as you consider yourself to be the body, you see the world as external and the imperfections appear to you. God is perfection. His work also is perfection. But you see it as imperfection because of your wrong identification.

Q: *Why did the Self manifest as this miserable world?*

A: In order that you might seek it. Your eyes cannot see themselves. Place a mirror before them and they see themselves. Similarly with creation.

'See yourself first and then see the whole world as the Self.'

Q: *So it amounts to this – that I should always look within.*

A: Yes.

Q: *Should I not see the world at all?*

A: You are not instructed to shut your eyes to the world. You are only to 'see yourself first and then see the whole world as the Self'. If you consider yourself as the body the world appears to be external. If you are the Self the world appears as *Brahman*.[15]

Q: *What is the best way to work for world peace?*

A: What is the world? What is peace, and who is the worker? The world is not in your sleep and forms a projection of your mind in your *jagrat* [waking state]. It is therefore an idea and nothing else. Peace is absence of disturbance. The disturbance is due to the arising of thoughts in the individual, which is only the ego rising up from pure consciousness.

To bring about peace means to be free from thoughts and to abide as pure consciousness. If one remains at peace oneself, there is only peace everywhere.

Q: *If it is a question of doing something one considers wrong, and thereby saving someone else from a great wrong, should one do it or refrain?*

A: What is right and wrong? There is no standard by which to judge something to be right and another to be wrong. Opinions differ according to the nature of the individual and according to the surroundings. They are again ideas and nothing more. Do not worry about them but get rid of thoughts instead. If you always remain in the right, then right will prevail in the world.[16]

Q: *Will not right conduct be enough to secure salvation?*

A: Salvation for whom? Who wants salvation? And what is right conduct? What is conduct? And what is right? Who is to judge what is right and what is wrong? According to previous *samskaras*, each one regards something or other as right. Only when the reality is known can the truth about right and wrong be known. The best course is to find out who wants this salvation. Tracing this 'who' or ego to its original source is the right conduct for everyone.

Q: *Will not the practice of good conduct* [nitya karmas] *lead to salvation? Several books state that it will.*

A: It is said so in books. Who denies that good conduct is good or that it will eventually lead you to the goal? Good conduct or *sat karma* purifies the *chitta* or mind and gives you *chitta suddhi* [pure mind]. The pure mind attains *jnana*, which is what is meant by salvation. So, eventually, *jnana* must be reached, that is, the ego must be traced to its source. But to those to whom this does not appeal, we have to say that *sat karmas* lead to *chitta suddhi*, and *chitta suddhi* will lead to right knowledge or *jnana*, and that in its turn gives salvation.[17]

Q: *What about motives? Are the motives for performing actions not important?*

A: Whatever is done lovingly, with righteous purity and with peace of mind, is a good action. Everything which is done with the stain of desire and with agitation filling the mind is classified as a bad action. Do not perform any good action [*karma*] through a bad means, thinking 'It is sufficient if it bears good fruit.' Because, if the means is bad, even a good action will turn out to be a bad one. Therefore, even the means of doing actions should be pure.[18]

Q: *Sankara says we are all free, not bound, and that we shall all go back to God from whom we have come as sparks from a fire. Then why should we not commit all sorts of sins?*

A: It is true we are not bound and that the real Self has no bondage. It is true that you will eventually go back to your source. But meanwhile, if you commit sins, as you call them, you will

have to face the consequences of such sins. You cannot escape them. If a man beats you, then, can you say, 'I am free, I am not bound by these beatings and I don't feel any pain. Let him beat on'? If you can feel like that, you can go on doing what you like. What is the use of merely saying with your lips 'I am free'?[19]

Q: *It is said that the whole universe is God's play of consciousness and that everything is full of* Brahman. *Then why should we say that bad habits and bad practices should be discarded?*

A: Suppose there is some wound inside the human body. If you neglect it, on the assumption that it is only a small part of the body, it causes pain to the whole body. If it is not cured by ordinary treatment, the doctor must come, cut off the affected portion with a knife and remove the impurities. If the diseased part is not cut off it will fester. If you do not bandage it after operating, pus will form. It is the same thing with regard to conduct. Bad habits and bad conduct are like a wound in the body. Every disease must be given appropriate treatment.[20]

Q: *So one should adhere to the conventional codes of behaviour?*

A: Since the prescribed observances for self-discipline [*niyamas*] help one to a considerable extent, they are worthy to be accepted and followed. But if they are found to obstruct the superior practice of enquiry for true knowledge, give them up immediately as deficient.[21]

CHAPTER 21
Karma, *destiny and free will*

The theory of *karma* is common to many oriental religions. In its most popular form it states that there is a universal accounting system in which each individual must experience the consequences of all his actions [*karmas*]; good actions bring good results and bad actions inevitably result in suffering to the one who does them. The theory also states that the consequences of actions [also known as *karmas*] need not necessarily be experienced in the present life, they can be carried over into future lives. Because of this, several sub-divisions of *karma* have been postulated. The following classification which was used by Sri Ramana is common to many Hindu schools of thought:

1 *Sanchita karma* The store of *karmic* debts accumulated from previous births.
2 *Prarabdha karma* That part of one's *sanchita karma* which must be worked out in the present life. Because the law of *karma* implies determinism in human activities, *prarabdha* is often translated as destiny.
3 *Agami karma* New *karma* accumulated in the present lifetime which is carried forward into future lives.

Sri Ramana accepted the validity of the laws of *karma* but said that they were only applicable as long as a person imagined that he was separate from the Self. At this level (the level of the *ajnani*), he said that individuals will pass through a series of pre-ordained activities and experiences, all of which are the consequences of previous acts and thoughts. He occasionally even said that every act and experience in a person's life is determined at birth and that the only freedom one has is to realise that there is no one acting and no one experiencing. However, once one realises the Self there is no one left to experience the consequences of actions and so the whole structure of *karmic* laws then becomes redundant.

Sri Ramana regarded the law of *karma* as a manifestation of God's will. He said that prior to Self-realisation there is a personal

God, *Iswara*, who controls each person's destiny. It is *Iswara* who has ordained that everyone must suffer the consequences of his actions and it is *Iswara* who selects the sequence of activities that each person must undergo in each lifetime. One cannot escape from *Iswara*'s jurisdiction while one still identifies with the activities of the body. The only way to become free of his authority is to transcend *karma* completely by realising the Self.

Q: *Is it possible to overcome, even while the body exists, the* prarabdha karma *which is said to last till the end of the body?*

A: Yes. If the agent upon whom the *karma* depends, namely the ego, which has come into existence between the body and the Self, merges in its source and loses its form, how can the *karma* which depends upon it survive? When there is no 'I' there is no *karma*.[1]

Q: *It is said that* prarabdha karma *is only a small fraction of the* karma *accumulated from previous lives. Is this true?*

A: A man might have performed many *karmas* in his previous births. A few of these alone will be chosen for this birth and he will have to enjoy their fruits in this birth. It is something like a slide show where the projectionist picks a few slides to be exhibited at a performance, the remaining slides being reserved for another performance. All this *karma* can be destroyed by acquiring knowledge of the Self. The different *karmas* are the slides, *karmas* being the result of past experiences, and the mind is the projector. The projector must be destroyed so that there will be no further reflection and no further births and no deaths.[2]

Q: *Who is the projectionist? What is the mechanism which selects a small portion of the* sanchita karma *and then decides that it shall be experienced as* prarabdha karma*?*

A: Individuals have to suffer their *karmas* but *Iswara* manages to make the best of their *karmas* for his purpose. God manipulates the fruits of *karma* but he does not add or take away from it. The subconscious of man is a warehouse of good and bad *karma*. *Iswara* chooses from this warehouse what he sees will best suit the spiritual evolution at the time of each man, whether pleasant or painful. Thus there is nothing arbitrary.[3]

Q: *In* Upadesa Saram *you say that* karma *bears fruit by the ordinance of God [*karta*]. Does this mean that we reap the consequences of* karma *solely because God wills it?*

A: In this verse *karta* [God] means *Iswara*. He is the one who distributes the fruits of actions to each person according to his *karma*. That means that he is the manifest *Brahman*. The real *Brahman* is unmanifest and without motion. It is only the manifest *Brahman* that is named as *Iswara*. He gives the fruit to each person according to his actions [*karma*]. That means that *Iswara* is only an agent and that he gives wages according to the labour done. That is all. Without this *sakti* [power] of *Iswara*, this *karma* would not take place. That is why *karma* is said to be on its own, inert.[4]

Q: *The present experiences are the result of past* karma. *If we know the mistakes committed before, we can rectify them.*

A: If one mistake is rectified there yet remains the whole *sanchita karma* from former births which is going to give you innumerable births. So that is not the procedure. The more you prune a plant, the more vigorously it grows. The more you rectify your *karma*, the more it accumulates. Find the root of *karma* and cut it off.[5]

Q: *Does the* karma *theory mean that the world is the result of action and reaction? If so, action and reaction of what?*

A: Until realisation there will be *karma*, that is action and reaction. After realisation there will be no *karma* and no world.[6]

Q: *If I am not the body why am I responsible for the consequences of my good and bad actions?*

A: If you are not the body and do not have the idea 'I am the doer', the consequences of your good or bad actions will not affect you. Why do you say about the actions the body performs 'I do this' or 'I did that'? As long as you identify yourself with the body like that you are affected by the consequences of the actions, that is to say, while you identify with the body you accumulate good and bad *karma*.

Q: *But since I am not the body I am not really responsible for the consequences of good or bad actions.*

A: If you are not, why do you bother about the question?[7]

Q: *In some places it is stated that human effort is the source of all strength and that it can even transcend* karma. *In others it is said that it is all divine grace. It is not clear which of them is correct.*

A: Yes, some schools of philosophy say that there is no God other than the *karmas* of the previous birth, that the *karma* done in the present birth in accordance with the scriptures is known as

purushakara [human effort], that the previous and present *karmas* meet for a head-on fight like rams and that the one that is weaker gets eliminated. That is why these people say that one should strengthen *purushakara*. If you ask such people what the origin of *karma* is, they say that such a question is not be raised as it is like the eternal question, 'Which is earlier, the seed or the tree?'

Debates such as this are mere arguments which can never arrive at the final truth. That is why I say first find out who you are. If one asks 'Who am I? How did I get this *dosha* [fault] of life?', the 'I' will subside and one will realise the Self. If one does this properly the idea of *dosha* will be eliminated and peace will be obtained. Why even obtained? The Self remains as it is.[8]

The essence of *karma* is to know the truth of oneself by enquiring 'Who am I, the doer, who begins to do *karmas*?' Unless the doer of *karmas*, the ego, is annihilated through enquiry, the perfect peace of supreme bliss, which is the result of *karma* yoga, cannot be achieved.[9]

Q: *Can people wipe out the consequences of their bad actions by doing* mantras *or* japa *or will they necessarily have to experience them?*

A: If the feeling 'I am doing *japa*' is not there, the bad actions committed by a man will not stick to him. If the feeling 'I am doing the *japa*' is there, the consequences of bad actions will persist.

Q: *Does not* punya *[merit accumulated from virtuous acts] extinguish* papa *[demerit accumulated from sinful acts]?*

A: So long as the feeling 'I am doing' is there, one must experience the result of one's acts, whether they are good or bad. How is it possible to wipe out one act with another? When the feeling that 'I am doing' is lost, nothing affects a man. Unless one realises the Self, the feeling 'I am doing' will never vanish. For one who realises the Self where is the need for *japa*? Where is the need for *tapas*? Owing to the force of *prarabdha* life goes on, but he who has realised the Self does not wish for anything.

Prarabdha karma is of three categories, *ichha*, *anichha* and *parechha* [personally desired, without desire and due to others' desire]. For the one who has realised the Self, there is no *ichha-prarabdha* but the two others, *anichha* and *parechha*, remain. Whatever a *jnani* does is for others only. If there are things to be done by him for others, he does them but the results do not affect him. Whatever be the actions that such people do, there is no

punya and no *papa* attached to them. But they do only what is proper according to the accepted standard of the world – nothing else.[10]

Those who know that what is to be experienced by them in this life is only what is already destined in their *prarabdha* will never feel perturbed about what is to be experienced. Know that all one's experiences will be thrust upon one whether one wills them or not.[11]

Q: *The realised man has no further* karma. *He is not bound by his* karma. *Why should he still remain within his body?*

A: Who asks this question? Is it the realised man or the *ajnani*? Why should you bother what the *jnani* does or why he does anything? Look after yourself. You are now under the impression you are the body and so you think that the *jnani* also has a body. Does the *jnani* say he has a body? He may look to you as if he has a body and he may appear to be doing things with the body, as others do, but he himself knows that he is bodiless. The burnt rope still looks like a rope, but it can't serve as a rope if you try to bind anything with it. A *jnani* is like that – he may look like other people, but this is only an outer appearance. So long as one identifies oneself with the body, all this is difficult to understand. That is why it is sometimes said in reply to such questions, 'The body of the *jnani* will continue till the force of *prarabdha* works itself out, and after the *prarabdha* is exhausted it will drop off.' An illustration made use of in this connection is that of an arrow already discharged which will continue to advance and strike its target. But the truth is the *jnani* has transcended all *karmas*, including the *prarabdha karma*, and he is not bound by the body or its *karmas*.[12]

Not even an iota of *prarabdha* exists for those who uninterruptedly attend to the space of consciousness, which always shines as 'I am', which is not confined in the vast physical space, and which pervades everywhere without limitations. Such alone is the meaning of the ancient saying, 'There is no fate for those who reach or experience the heavens.'[13]

Q: *If a thing comes to me without any planning or working for it and I enjoy it, will there be no bad consequences from it?*

A: It is not so. Every act must have its consequences. If anything comes your way by reason of *prarabdha*, you can't help it. If you take what comes, without any special attachment, and without any desire for more of it or for a repetition of it, it will

not harm you by leading to further births. On the other hand, if you enjoy it with great attachment and naturally desire for more of it, it is bound to lead to more and more births.[14]

Q: *According to the astrological science, predictions are made about coming events taking into account the influence of the stars. Is that true?*

A: So long as you have the feeling of egotism all that is true. When that egotism gets destroyed all that is untrue.

Q: *Does it mean that astrology won't be true in the case of those whose egotism is destroyed?*

A: Who is there left to say it won't be true? There will be seeing only if there is one who sees. In the case of those whose egotism is destroyed, even if they appear to see they do not really see.[15]

Destiny is the result of past action. It concerns the body. Let the body act as may suit it. Why are you concerned with it? Why do you pay attention to it? Should anything happen, it happens as the result of one's past actions, of divine will and of other factors.[16]

Q: *The present is said to be due to past* karma. *Can we transcend the past* karma *by our free will now?*

A: See what the present is. If you do this you will understand what is affected by or has a past or a future, what is ever-present and always free and what remains unaffected by the past or future or by any past *karma*.[17]

Q: *Is there such a thing as free will?*

A: Whose will is it? So long as there is the sense of doership, there is the sense of enjoyment and of individual will. But if this sense is lost through the practice of *vichara*, the divine will will act and guide the course of events. Fate is overcome by *jnana*, Self-knowledge, which is beyond will and fate.[18]

Q: *I can understand that the outstanding events in a man's life, such as his country, nationality, family, career or profession, marriage, death, etc., are all predestined by his* karma, *but can it be that all the details of his life, down to the minutest, have already been determined? Now, for instance, I put this fan that is in my hand down on the floor here. Can it be that it was already decided that on such and such a day, at such and such an hour, I should move the fan like this and put it down here?*

A: Certainly. Whatever this body is to do and whatever experiences it is to pass through was already decided when it came into existence.

Q: *What becomes then of man's freedom and responsibility for his actions?*

A: The only freedom man has is to strive for and acquire the *jnana* which will enable him not to identify himself with the body. The body will go through the actions rendered inevitable by *prarabdha* and a man is free either to identify himself with the body and be attached to the fruits of its actions, or to be detached from it and be a mere witness of its activities.[19]

Q: *So free will is a myth?*

A: Free will holds the field in association with individuality. As long as individuality lasts there is free will. All the scriptures are based on this fact and they advise directing the free will in the right channel.

Find out to whom free will or destiny matters. Find out where they come from, and abide in their source. If you do this, both of them are transcended. That is the only purpose of discussing these questions. To whom do these questions arise? Find out and be at peace.[20]

Q: *If what is destined to happen will happen, is there any use in prayer or effort or should we just remain idle?*

A: There are only two ways to conquer destiny or be independent of it. One is to enquire for whom is this destiny and discover that only the ego is bound by destiny and not the Self, and that the ego is non-existent. The other way is to kill the ego by completely surrendering to the Lord, by realising one's helplessness and saying all the time, 'Not I but thou, O Lord', giving up all sense of 'I' and 'mine' and leaving it to the Lord to do what he likes with you. Surrender can never be regarded as complete so long as the devotee wants this or that from the Lord. True surrender is love of God for the sake of love and nothing else, not even for the sake of liberation. In other words, complete effacement of the ego is necessary to conquer destiny, whether you achieve this effacement through self-enquiry or through *bhakti marga*.[21]

Glossary

advaita — Non-duality: also a subdivision of *vedanta* philosophy

ahamkara — Ego

aham-vritti — 'I'-thought

ajapa — Unspoken and involuntary repetition of the name of God

ajata — Non-causality: see the introduction to chapter 21

ajnana — Ignorance, the opposite of *jnana*

ajnani — One who has not realised the Self

ananda — Bliss

Aparoksha Anubhuti — A work on Self-realisation attributed to Sankara

Arjuna — The recipient of Krishna's teachings in the *Bhagavad Gita*

Arunachala — The holy mountain in South India where Sri Ramana spent all his adult life

asana — Posture or seat: see the introduction to chapter 13

atman — The Self

atma-vichara — Self-enquiry

avidya — Ignorance

Bhagavad Gita — A portion of the *Mahabharata* in which Krishna, an incarnation of Vishnu, gives instructions to Arjuna

Bhagavata — Also called the *Bhagavatam*: a puranic work which recounts some of the life and teachings of Krishna

bhakta — Devotee

bhakti — Devotion

Blavatsky, H.P. — A Russian occultist, the founder of Theosophy

Brahma — The Hindu God who is the creator of the universe; he is one of the three principal deities of Hinduism

Brahma-jnana — Knowledge of *Brahman*

Brahman — The impersonal absolute of Hinduism

Brindavan — A place in North India where Krishna once lived

Chaitanya — A sixteenth-century Hindu saint, well-known for his devotion to Krishna

chakras — Psychic centres in the body: see the introduction to chapter 13

chit — Consciousness

Courtallam — A small town in South India

Dattatreya — A sage whose name is mentioned in several *puranas*; little is known about his date or location, but the *advaitic* work *Avadhuta Gita* is attributed to him

dehatma buddhi — 'I am the body' idea

dhyana — Meditation

diksha — Initiation

Ganapati — A Hindu God with an elephant head and a man's body; he is the son of Siva

Ganesa — See Ganapati

Gaudapada — Sankara's Guru's Guru, an early exponent of *ajata* and the author of a famous commentary (*karika*) on the *Mandukyopanishad*

gayatri — The most famous Vedic *mantra* – 'Let that adorable, full of light [God], enlighten us, who meditate on him'

Gita — See *Bhagavad Gita*

gunas — The three qualities of all manifestation – *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*: see the introduction to chapter 12

Iswara — The supreme personal God of Hinduism

Janaka — An Indian king: an account of his Self-realisation can be found in the *Ashtavakra Gita*

japa — Literally, 'muttering', but as an abbreviated form of *nama-japa* it means repetition of the name of God.

jivan mukta — One who is liberated while still alive

jivan mukti Liberation while one is still alive

jnana Knowledge of the Self: see the introduction to chapter 1

jnana drishti The vision of knowledge

jnani One who has realised the Self

Kailasa A sacred mountain in the Himalayas where Siva is supposed to reside

kaivalya The state of oneness

Kaivalya The full title is *Kaivalya Navaneeta* and it is a Tamil text on *advaita*

karika See Gaudapada

karma There are three principal meanings:

(1) action,
(2) consequences of actions,
(3) destiny:

see the introduction to chapter 21

Kauravas A family in the Mahabharata who were the chief antagonists of the Pandavas; Arjuna was one of the Pandavas and with Krishna's assistance the Kauravas were destroyed

kevala Oneness

Krishna An incarnation (*avatara*) of Vishnu

kundalini Yogic power: see the introduction to chapter 13

laya Literally it means 'dissolution', but when Sri Ramana uses it he is indicating a trance-like state in which the mind is temporarily in abeyance

leela The play of God

mahatma Great soul, great man or saint

mahavakyas Literally it means 'great sayings'; more specifically it refers to four upanishadic quotations which affirm the reality of the Self:

(1) 'That thou art',
(2) 'I am *Brahman*',
(3) 'This Self is *Brahman*',
(4) '*Prajnana* (consciousness) is *Brahman*'

Maha Yoga A book on Sri Ramana's teachings: see bibliography

Malayalam One of the vernacular languages of South India

Mandukyopanishad One of the major *Upanishads*

mantras Sacred words given to a disciple by a Guru: see the introduction to chapter 8

maya Illusion

moksha Liberation

mouna Silence

muktas Liberated ones

mukti Liberation

nirvikalpa No differences; *nirvikalpa samadhi* is the *samadhi* in which no differences are perceived: see the introduction to chapter 14

Parabrahman The supreme *Brahman*

Panchadasi A fourteenth-century work on *advaita vedanta*

papa Sin, or the bad consequencs of bad acts

Patanjali The author of the *Yoga Sutras* and the founder of *raja* yoga

prana The vital energy that sustains the body

pranava The *mantra om*

punya Merit accumulated from good acts

Purusha Sukta A portion of the *Rig Veda*; the *Rig Veda* is the oldest Hindu scripture

rajas Activity

raja yoga The system of yoga formulated by Patanjali: '*raja*' literally means 'royal'

Ramakrishna A nineteenth-century Bengali saint

Ramanasramam The ashram which grew up around Sri Ramana

sadhaka Also spelt *sadhak*: a spiritual seeker

sadhana Literally it translates as 'means', but in a more general sense it means 'spiritual practice'

Sadhana Panchakam A work attributed to Sankara which gives advice to spiritual seekers

sadhu A noble person or a spiritual seeker. However, Sri Ramana frequently used this

	term as a title for someone who has realised the Self.
sahaja	Natural
sakti	Power
samadhi	Sri Ramana used the term to mean a state in which one has a direct experience of the Self: see the introduction to chapter 14
samskaras	Innate tendencies
Sankara	Also called Sankaracharya: an eighth-century religious reformer and philosopher. He was the first to popularise the teachings of *advaita vedanta*
sastras	Scriptures
sat	Being
sat-chit-ananda	Being-consciousness-bliss
sat-sanga	Association with being, or, alternatively, being in the presence of someone who has realised the Self
sattvic	Pure: see the introduction to chapter 12
savikalpa	Literally 'with differences': Sri Ramana used the term to indicate a level of *samadhi* which one maintained by constant effort. See the introduction to chapter 14
Shirdi Sai Baba	An eccentric and charismatic spiritual teacher, widely known because of his supernatural powers. He died in 1918
siddhis	Supernatural powers
Siva	One of the three principal Hindu deities. Sri Ramana also used the word as a synonym for the Self
sloka	A verse in a Sanskrit scriptural work
soham	The affirmation 'I am he'
Sri, Srimad	Honorific prefixes
sushumna	A psychic channel in the spine: see the introduction to chapter 13
swarupa	Real form or real nature
Swarupanand	A seventeenth-century Tamil Guru
tamas	Inertia or sluggishness
Tamil	A South Indian language, Sri Ramana's mother-tongue
tapas	Usually this means meditation connected with the practice of personal self-denial or bodily mortification. However, *tapas* has many other meanings such as penance, religious austerity and heat.
Tattvaraya	A disciple of Swarupanand, a seventeenth-century Tamil Guru, and the author of several philosophical works in Tamil
Theosophical Society	A society founded by Mme Blavatsky in the nineteenth century to investigate the powers latent in man and to promote a universal brotherhood
Tiruvannamalai	A town about a mile from Sri Ramana's ashram
turiya	The fourth state
turyatita	Transcending the fourth
upadesa	Teachings
Upadesa Saram	A thirty verse Sanskrit poem composed by Sri Ramana
Upanishads	The concluding portions of the *Vedas* (the primary scriptural authority of Hinduism). The *Upanishads* are the texts from which all *vedanta* philosophy is derived
vada	Theory
Vaikuntha	The heaven of Vishnu
vasanas	Mental tendencies
vedanta	A metaphysical philosophy derived from the *Upanishadic* texts
Vedas	Four collections of scriptures dating from 2000 BC to 500 BC which are the ultimate source of authority for most Hindus
Vellore	A town fifty miles north of Sri Ramana's ashram
vichara	Self-enquiry
videha mukti	Liberated at the moment of death
Vidyaranya	The author of *Panchadasi*, a fourteenth-century work on *advaita*
Vishnu	One of the three principal deities of Hinduism. Vishnu periodically reincarnates in a human body
Vivekachudamani	An *advaitic* work attributed to Sankara. Nowadays most scholars think that it was

	written at least 200 years after he died
vritti	Modification, usually a mental modification
Who am I?	One of Sri Ramana's early written works which was based on some answers he gave in 1901
Yama	The Hindu God of death
Yoga Vasishtha	An *advaitic* text, attributed to Valmiki, in which the sage Vasishtha answers questions put by Rama, an incarnation of Vishnu
Yoga Sastra	Yoga scriptures
yugapat-srishti	Instantaneous creation

Notes and references

PART ONE THE SELF

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CHAPTER 3 THE *JNANI*

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21 Muruganar, op. cit., v.683.
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2 A. Osborne, *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self Knowledge*, p.142.
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2 S. Natanananda, *Spiritual Instruction of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi*, p.2.
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9 Sri Ramana wrote several poems in praise of the mountain Arunachala. In some of the verses he specifically says that it was his Guru, his God and his Self.
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17 Ibid., p.572.
18 Ibid., p.247.
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22 Ibid., p.140.
23 Ibid., p.186.
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25 M. Venkataramiah, op. cit., p.242.

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2 Muruganar, *Guru Vachaka Kovai*, v.691.

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TALKS
WITH
Sri Ramana Maharshi

Volume One

FOREWORD*

The "Talks", first published in three volumes, is now issued a handy one-volume edition. There is no doubt that the present edition will be received by aspirants all over the world with the same veneration and regard that the earlier edition elicited from them. This is not a book to be lightly read and laid aside; it is bound to prove to be an unfailing guide to increasing numbers of pilgrims to the Light Everlasting.

We cannot be too grateful to Sri Munagala S. Venkataramiah (now Swami Ramanananda Saraswati) for the record that he kept of the "Talks" covering a period of four years from 1935 to 1939. Those devotees who had the good fortune of seeing Bhagavan Ramana will, on reading these "Talks", become naturally reminiscent and recall with delight their own mental record of the words of the Master. Despite the fact that the great Sage of Arunachala taught for the most part through silence, he did instruct through speech also, and that too lucidly without baffling and beclouding the minds of his listeners. One would wish that every word that he uttered had been preserved for posterity. But we have to be thankful for what little of the utterances has been put on record. These "Talks" will be found to throw light on the "Writings" of the Master; and probably it is best to study them along with the "Writings", translations of which are available.

Sri Ramana's teachings were not given in general. In fact, the Sage had no use for "lectures" or "discourses". His words were primarily addressed to the particular aspirant who felt some difficulty in his spiritual path and sought to have it resolved. But, as the same difficulties arise in the quest after the Self and as the method of resolving them is the same, the Maharshi's replies to questions have the quality of universality.

It is not all that can ask the right questions or frame them properly. The "Talks" of the *Guru*, therefore, is not simply to answer to the point, as in an examination paper. He has often to get behind the words that constitute a question and correct the questioner even in

* Originally written for the Second Edition.

the matter of questioning. And, when irrelevant and futile questions are asked, it is not his business to satisfy the idle curiosity of the questioner or confirm him in his delusions. Sri Ramana does not leave his interlocutor in the place where he was. As one of the devotees put it, "All our questions are from our standpoint, and Sri Bhagavan's replies are from his standpoint. The questions are not only answered, but are also undermined."

Various are the attitudes with which one may approach a saint. Sceptics and agnostics, theists and atheists, seekers of miracles and hunters of psychic phenomena - all used to go to the Maharshi. Each would naturally put questions that came uppermost to his or her mind; and the nature of the questions would depend on the attitude and interests of the person concerned. The glory of the Master lay in removing the attitudes and interests that were base and making the devotee long for realizing the Supreme Truth.

Visitors to the Asramam often used to put questions to Sri Ramana about occult powers and psychic phenomena. Is it not good to acquire occult powers such as telepathy? Is not the power to make one's body invisible a mark of mature wisdom. Can one read others' minds? The Master's reply to all such questions was that the occult and the miraculous are not the spiritual. The supernormal powers are more hindrances than helps in the path to the Supreme Spirit. Some questioners were interested in matters relating to the dead: What happens to the dead? Can one see them? Here again, Sri Ramana taught that these problems were irrelevant and that no seeker after the truth should be concerned with them. An aristocratic and distinguished lady-visitor once enquired: 'Maharajji, can we see the dead?' The Master replied: 'Yes'. The lady asked: 'Can the *yogis* show them to us?' The Master: 'Yes, they may. But do not ask me to show them to you; for I cannot'. The lady: 'Do you see them?' The Master: 'Yes, in dreams.'

Sri Ramana's central teaching is: Self-inquiry. Instead of wanting to know this and that, seek to know the Self. Ask 'Who am I?' instead of asking about a hundred other things. Self-inquiry ought to be the easiest of all tasks. But it seems to be the most difficult because we have become strangers to our Self. What one has to do is simple - to

abide as the Self. This is the ultimate Truth. This is one's eternal, natural, inherent state. On account of ignorance we identify ourselves with the not-I.

The most subtle of all these identifications is with the ego. Let us search for the root of the ego. Where from does this pseudo-I arise? At the end of this quest we shall find that the ego disappears letting the eternal Self shine. So the best discipline is the inquiry: 'Who am I?' This is the greatest *japa*. This is the true *pranayama*. The thought 'I am not the body' (*naham*) is exhalation (*rechaka*); the inquiry 'Who am I?' (*koham*) is inhalation (*puraka*); the realization 'I am He' (*soham*) is retention of breath (*kumbhaka*). The fruit of Self-inquiry is the realization that the Self is all, and that there is nothing else. For those who follow this method no other *sadhana* is necessary. But even those who adopt the discipline of devotion (*bhakti*) reach the same goal. If one surrenders one's ego to either the *Guru* or God, one realizes the Self.

Sri Ramana's teachings as found in the "Talks" will bring hope to everyone. No one need think that he is beyond the pale of redemption. An old American visitor once asked the Master, 'Maharshi, do you think we are bad boys'? The Master's characteristic reply was, 'Do not tell me so. But you need not think you are bad boys'. Anything that is bad in us will surely be removed, if only we listen to the Maharshi's wise words that are recorded in the present book.

And, may we read it with a view to preparing ourselves for understanding the Master's higher teaching which was through silence!

University of Madras,
August 1l, 1958. T. M. P. MAHADEVAN

INTRODUCTION

These 'Talks' cover a period of four years, l935-1939, and were all recorded by Sri Munagala S. Venkataramiah (now Swami Ramanananda Saraswati), a very old disciple of Sri Ramana Maharshi. Though a Telugu by birth he speaks English and Tamil fluently and is conversant with Sanskrit. These are necessary qualifications for one who wished to record the conversations of Sri Bhagavan with his various disciples and visitors.

The four years that are covered here, were the days when the Asramam reached the summit of its glory. Maharshi's health was on the whole good and the Hall where he sat was open day and night to welcome one and all. Visitors flocked there from every corner of the world, there was hardly a country that was not represented at one time or another. The war naturally interfered with this influx, though the number of Indian visitors steadily increased as time went on. But it was these conversations, many with Westerners, that were especially interesting; the modern tendency towards materialism and irreligion, on which the West often prides itself, met its match here. Sri Bhagavan glowed like the sun, and even those who did not understand him or agree with his words were fascinated and could not help but be elevated by his presence.

Though Sri Venkataramiah was fully qualified for the work, to follow Sri Bhagavan was no easy task when he once started to talk. He had such a command of his subject that he was never at a loss for a word in whichever language he might happen to be speaking; so, few notes could be taken, the listeners being too busy trying not to lose a word of what was being said, added to which it was not always easy to understand. Sri Venkataramiah acted as interpreter for the many English-speaking people who flocked to the Asramam, as Sri Bhagavan was reluctant to say more than a few words in that language, though he knew it sufficiently well to read the English newspapers and magazines. But to act as interpreter was an even more difficult task than just recording; the flow of words was so steady that no interval was left in which their meaning could be conveyed to the ardent questioner. Often Sri Bhagavan had to be asked to wait while his words were conveyed to the anxious listener. So the difficulties of

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* Originally written for the First Edition.

making this record can easily be imagined; only one who had sat for years at the feet of the Master and had thoroughly absorbed his philosophy and the way he expounded it, was competent for the task. Sri Venkataramiah, the ideal person for this, had luckily been found.

That the language used here is not always elegant is admitted, this was to be expected in the circumstances; doubtless it could have been corrected, but it has been left much as it was, as it was felt that a certain spontaneity that it now possesses would otherwise have been lost. Though the conversations were in various South Indian languages most of it was recorded in English, the rest in Tamil and Telugu, which passages have been translated for the purpose of this book. The completed notes were often shown to the questioners for verification, but the whole had the seal of approval of Sri Bhagavan himself, as the records were always shown to him for his approval or the necessary alteration after they had been entered in the notebook. Thus we may be sure that here we have the exact teaching of the Master, and reading them we once again sit at his feet in the Old Hall, drinking in every word that falls from his lips; enraptured by his smile, the movement of his delicate hands, and his actions; for he was a true artist, often acting the part of the story he was telling, the better to drive home his point.

Some may be inclined to criticise this book as monotonous, but this supposed monotony is deliberate, for some new point is always brought out however similar the talk may seem. Sri Bhagavan always stressed the one essential truth that was necessary for Liberation, that there is only one Self and nothing but the Self. Know that and everything else is known. This cannot be repeated too often.

Doubtless, an intellectual grasp of this fact sets one on the path, but the path once started, mental knowledge must then become actual experience. To know a thing absolutely, not just superficially, one must be that thing, otherwise knowledge is incomplete. As I pointed out, we are always nothing but the Self, but associating ourselves with the ignorance of limitation, with an ego, we forget the Seer and identify ourselves with the seen. But what can we do about it? The habit is so long-standing, birth after birth has been imagined and century after century has been fabricated by the mind. It has thus involved itself more and more in ignorance, that it now finds itself

disinclined and, even if willing, almost unable to disentangle itself from the thralls of the play-world it has created.

You are the Self, he tells us, nothing but the Self, anything else is just imagination, so BE the Self here and now. There is no need to run off to a forest or shut oneself in a room; carry on with your essential activities but free yourself from association with the doer of them. Self is the witness, you are That.

Example after example is given in these talks, in language to suit all tastes and mentalities. The reading of the book automatically drives one inward to the source. It is itself a sufficient *sadhana*. Do not delude yourself, you are already That, there is nothing more to be obtained, only false association to be shed, limitation to be recognised as illusory.

His method of doing this is well-known: Self-Enquiry. Always and at all times seek for the source of the ego, the apparent actor, and on the attainment of that goal, he tells us, the ego will drop away of its own accord, and nothing will be left but the all-blissful Self. But this is not the place to go into details of method; for those interested the necessary books can easily be obtained from Sri Ramanasramam.

What more is there to say, but to advise one and all to read this book and try and make it a part of themselves? Not one word to be passed over lightly, or one conversation to be dismissed as superfluous. It is all pure gold. And here again we find the ever-living Sri Ramana Maharshi before us in person, teaching us in his own inimitable words for our benefit and delight.

It was found after preparing this book for the press, that the first part was not in chronological order, but rather than delay publication it was decided not to alter the present arrangement as it makes absolutely no difference to the context. The dates are only included for reference, and as a guarantee of authenticity.

Sri Ramanasramam,
1st January, 1955.

Note By The Recorder

In a very critical and distressing period of his life, an humble devotee sought the Presence of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, for his own peace of mind, and lived in the Asramam with the kind permission of the *Sarvadhikari*, Sri Niranjanananda Swami. The seeker took it upon himself to note down, as occasions arose, the sweet, refreshing and enlightening words of the Master. This self-imposed task was undertaken for the purification of his own mind and better understanding of the subtle and profound words of Sri Bhagavan. Shortly after, the *Sarvadhikari* officially took them over to the Asramam. These notes* covering the period 1935-39 are included in the present volumes with the hope that some readers may find them interesting and helpful in their spiritual quest.

Sri Ramanasramam,
1st January, 1955.

Recorder

* A few extracts from these notes have already appeared in the Ashram publication: *Maharshi's Gospel.*

Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

Volume 1

15th May, 1935

Talk 1.

A wandering monk (*sannyasi*) was trying to clear his doubt: "How to realise that all the world is God?"

Maharshi: If you make your outlook that of wisdom, you will find the world to be God. Without knowing the Supreme Spirit (Brahman), how will you find His all-pervasiveness?

Talk 2.

Someone enquired about the nature of perception.

M.: Whatever state one is in, the perceptions partake of that state. The explanation is that in the waking state (*jagrat*) the gross body perceives gross names and forms; in *swapna* (the dream state) the mental body perceives the mental creations in their manifold forms and names; in the *sushupti* (deep dreamless sleep), the identification with the body being lost, there are no perceptions; similarly in the Transcendental state identity with Brahman places the man in harmony with everything, and there is nothing apart from his Self.

Talk 3.

A question was asked as to the nature of happiness.

M.: If a man thinks that his happiness is due to external causes and his possessions, it is reasonable to conclude that his happiness must increase with the increase of possessions and diminish in proportion to their diminution. Therefore if he is devoid of possessions, his happiness should be nil. What is the real experience of man? Does it conform to this view?

In deep sleep the man is devoid of possessions, including his own body. Instead of being unhappy he is quite happy. Everyone desires

to sleep soundly. The conclusion is that happiness is inherent in man and is not due to external causes. One must realise his Self in order to open the store of unalloyed happiness.

Talk 4.

Maharshi was asked by an educated young man: "How do you say that the Heart is on the right, whereas the biologists have found it to be on the left?" The man asked for authority.

M.: Quite so. The physical organ is on the left; that is not denied. But the Heart of which I speak is non-physical and is only on the right side. It is my experience, no authority is required by me. Still you can find confirmation in a Malayalam Ayurvedic book and in *Sita Upanishad*; and he produced the quotation (*mantra*) from the latter and repeated the text (*sloka*) from the former.

Talk 5.

Mr. M. Frydman, an engineer, remarked on the subject of Grace, "A salt doll diving into the sea will not be protected by a waterproof coat".

It was a very happy simile and was applauded as such. Maharshi added, "The body is the waterproof coat".

Talk 6.

A question was asked by a monk (*sannyasi*) about how to prevent the mind from being distracted.

M.: You see the objects on forgetting your own Self. If you keep hold of your Self, you will not see the objective world.

Talk 7.

When asked if occult powers (*siddhis*) can be achieved along with Omnipotence (*Iswaratva*) as mentioned in the last verse of *Dakshinamurti Ashtakam*, Maharshi said: "Let Omnipotence (*Iswaratva*) be accomplished first and then the other question may be raised."

Talk 8.

"Can anyone get any benefit by repeating sacred syllables (*mantras*) picked up casually?

M.: "No. He must be competent and initiated in such *mantras*." Maharshi illustrated this by the following story: A King visited his

Premier in his residence. There he was told that the Premier was engaged in repetition of sacred syllables (*japa*). The King waited for him and, on meeting him, asked what the *japa* was. The Premier said that it was the holiest of all, *Gayatri*. The King desired to be initiated by the Premier. But the Premier confessed his inability to initiate him. Therefore the King learned it from someone else, and meeting the Minister later he repeated the *Gayatri* and wanted to know if it was right. The Minister said that the *mantra* was correct, but it was not proper for him to say it. When pressed for an explanation, the Minister called to a page close by and ordered him to take hold of the King. The order was not obeyed. The order was often repeated, and still not obeyed. The King flew into a rage and ordered the same man to hold the Minister, and it was immediately done. The Minister laughed and said that the incident was the explanation required by the King. "How?" asked the King. The Minister replied, "The order was the same and the executor also, but the authority was different. When I ordered, the effect was nil, whereas, when you ordered, there was immediate effect. Similarly with *mantras*."

Talk 9.

Someone enquired: Why is it said in scriptures that the Sage is like a child?

M.: A child and a Sage (*jnani*) are similar in a way. Incidents interest a child only so long as they last. It ceases to think of them after they have passed away. So then, it is apparent that they do not leave any impression on the child and it is not affected by them mentally. So it is with a Sage.

Talk 10.

A visitor asked how to realise oneself in accordance with Maharshi's instructions, contained in his text of *Truth Revealed*, verse 9, supplement. The difficulty was in controlling the mind.

M.: It is to be done by controlling the breath. If you practise it by yourself without other help, then the mind is controlled. Otherwise the mind comes under control spontaneously in the presence of a superior power. Such is the greatness of association with the wise (*satsanga*).

Talk 11.

"Can destiny (*karma*) ever come to an end?"

M.: The *karmas* carry the seeds of their own destruction in themselves.

Talk 12.

A man asked the Maharshi to say something to him. When asked what he wanted to know, he said that he knew nothing and wanted to hear something from the Maharshi.

M.: You know that you know nothing. Find out that knowledge. That is liberation (*mukti*).

6th January, 1935

Talk 13.

Mrs. M. A. Piggot, an English lady, who had read "Search in Secret India", came to see the Maharshi. The services of a disciple as interpreter were provided. There were many visitors at the time in the hall, including some ladies with their infants. The place resounded with noise. At length silence prevailed. Suddenly Maharshi, who seemed to be looking at infinite space, was heard to say softly, "Monkey"! A little baby was then discovered in the doorway (unobserved by the mother who was seated on the other side of the door) with a large monkey standing on his hind legs, who with both hands was fondling the child not hurting it in the slightest, both being at peace with each other in Maharshi's presence. When Maharshi's voice was heard the monkey jumped away adroitly and disappeared. The incident greatly impressed the lady.

7th January, 1935

"Is a Master necessary for realisation?" Mrs. Piggot asked first.

M.: The realisation is the result of the Master's grace more than teachings, lectures, meditation, etc. They are only secondary aids, whereas the former is the primary and the essential cause.

Devotee: What are the obstacles which hinder realisation of the Self?

M.: They are habits of mind (*vasanas*).

D.: How to overcome the mental habits (*vasanas*)?

M.: By realising the Self.

D.: That is a vicious circle.

M.: It is the ego which raises such difficulties, creating obstacles and then suffers from the perplexity of apparent paradoxes. Find out who makes the enquiries and the Self will be found.

D.: What are the aids for realisation?

M.: The teachings of the Scriptures and of realised souls

D.: Can such teachings be discussions, lectures and meditations?

M.: Yes, all these are only secondary aids, whereas the essential is the Master's grace.

D.: How long will it take for one to get that?

M.: Why do you desire to know?

D.: To give me hope.

M.: Even such a desire is an obstacle. The Self is ever there, there is nothing without it. Be the Self and the desires and doubts will disappear. Such Self is the witness in sleep, dream and waking states of existence. These states belong to the ego. The Self transcends even the ego. Did you not exist in sleep? Did you know then that you were asleep or unaware of the world? It is only in the waking state that you describe the experience of sleep as being unawareness; therefore the consciousness when asleep is the same as that when awake. If you know what this waking consciousness is, you will know the consciousness which witnesses all the three states. Such consciousness could be found by seeking the consciousness as it was in sleep.

D.: In that case, I fall asleep.

M.: No harm!

D.: It is a blank.

M.: For whom is the blank? Find out. You cannot deny yourself at any time. The Self is ever there and continues in all states.

D.: Should I remain as if in sleep and be watchful at the same time?

M.: Yes. Watchfulness is the waking state. Therefore the state will not be one of sleep, but sleepless sleep. If you go the way of your

thoughts you will be carried away by them and you will find yourself in an endless maze.

D.: So, then, I must go back tracing the source of thoughts.

M.: Quite so; in that way the thoughts will disappear and the Self alone will remain. In fact there is no inside or outside for the Self. They are also projections of the ego. The Self is pure and absolute.

D.: It is understood intellectually only. Is not intellect a help for realisation?

M.: Yes, up to a certain stage. Even so, realise that the Self transcends the intellect — the latter must itself vanish to reach the Self.

D.: Does my realisation help others?

M.: Yes, certainly. It is the best help possible. But there are no others to be helped. For a realised being sees the Self, just like a goldsmith estimating the gold in various jewels. When you identify yourself with the body then only the forms and shapes are there. But when you transcend your body the others disappear along with your body-consciousness.

D.: Is it so with plants, trees, etc.?

M.: Do they exist at all apart from the Self? Find it out. You think that you see them. The thought is projected out from your Self. Find out wherefrom it rises. Thoughts will cease to rise and the Self alone will remain.

D.: I understand theoretically. But they are still there.

M.: Yes. It is like a cinema-show. There is the light on the screen and the shadows flitting across impress the audience as the enactment of some piece. Similarly also will it be, if in the same play an audience also is shown. The seer, the seen, will then only be the screen. Apply it to yourself. You are the screen, the Self has created the ego, the ego has its accretions of thoughts which are displayed as the world, the trees, plants, etc., of which you are asking. In reality, all these are nothing but the Self. If you see the Self, the same will be found to be all, everywhere and always. Nothing but the Self exists.

D.: Yes, I still understand only theoretically. Yet the answers are simple and beautiful and convincing.

M.: Even the thought, "I do not realise" is a hindrance. In fact, the Self alone is.

8th January, 1935

Talk 14.

An old man came and sat in the hall. Maharshi was reading Sarma's Sanskrit recension of *Arunachala Akshara Manamalai* (the first of *The Five Hymns to Arunachala*). The man asked softly: "It is said that realisation is beyond expression; and expression always fails to describe the realisation. How is it?"

M.: The point has been mentioned in *Arunachala Ashtakam*, Verse three where it is admitted that, although the expression of realisation is impossible, still its existence is indicated.

Soon after there were visible signs of emotion in the man. His breath was deep and hard and he fell on the floor prostrating humbly and got up only after one or two minutes. Remaining calm a brief while, he left the place. Evidently the man had some illumination. He sought confirmation from Maharshi, who responded fittingly. He found confirmation, and humbly and feelingly acknowledged the divine intercession on his behalf.

Talk 15.

A question was asked about the Upanishadic passage, "The Supreme Spirit is subtler than the subtlest and larger than the largest."

M.: Even the structure of the atom has been found by the mind. Therefore the mind is subtler than the atom. That which is behind the mind, namely the individual soul, is subtler than the mind. Further, the Tamil saint Manickavachagar has said of the specks dancing in a beam of sunlight, that if each represents a universe, the whole sunlight will represent the Supreme Being.

19th January, 1935

Talk 16.

Mr. Douglas Ainslie (Mr. Grant Duff), an aristocratic English gentleman, 70 years old, nephew of a former Governor of Madras, an author and poet formerly attached to the British Legation in Athens, Paris and The Hague, had come to Madras as a guest of Government House. He came

to see Maharshi with a letter of introduction from Paul Brunton. Next day he returned and remained a little less than an hour in the hall. On both days practically no words were exchanged, only gaze meeting gaze. His habits are abstemious; he remains without food of any kind till 1 p.m. and then lunches; he is said to have coffee and biscuits in the evening and retires without any further food. He has been a bachelor all along, walks a few miles a day on an empty stomach, speaks little and is very graceful in his movements. His voice is low and soft and his words appear to come from the heart. He has friends among whom might be counted the late Sir John Woodroffe, Sir Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Prof. Thomas, Sanskrit Professor in Oxford University. He expressed a desire to hear the Vedas. On Monday a letter arrived from Riga and the questions therein happened to coincide with the questions the European visitor had asked relating to the existence of departed souls and how best to serve them.

The reply sent to Riga was read out to him. Tamil songs from Maharshi's "Truth Revealed" and the Vedas were repeated in his presence. He considered the recitations magnificent. He came the next afternoon and to the wonder of others, had an experience on the previous night which he repeated to Maharshi. It was that he had seen something like an electric light within himself in the heart centre on the right side. And he added further that he had seen the sun shining within. Maharshi smiled a little and then had a translation of "*Atmavidya*" (Self-Knowledge) read out to him wherein there is the cryptic saying that realisation consists in reaching the *Atman* (Self) which is the expanse of consciousness (*chidvyoman*) as distinguished from the mind, which is the expansion of *chittavyoman*. This explanation appealed to him.

Speaking of him later, Maharshi remarked, "Just think of an old man of 70 not choosing to live peacefully in his own house on the income he had earned! How intense has been his earnestness that he has left his native land, dared a sea-voyage of 6,000 miles, and faced the hardships of long railway journeys in a foreign land, ignorant of the language, undergoing the vicissitudes of a lonely life, submitting to the inclemency of a hot climate, in surroundings uncongenial and unaccustomed to him. He could have been happy in his own house. It is his longing for internal peace that has brought him here." Quite so!

The intensity of his earnestness is revealed by his illuminating experiences here within four days of his arrival, people say.

With regard to the question concerning departed souls: so long as a man identifies himself with his gross body the thought materialised as gross manifestations must be real to him. Because his body is imagined to have originated from another physical being, the other exists as truly as his own body. Having existed here once it certainly survives death, because the offspring is still here and feels he has been born of the other. Under these circumstances the other world is true; and the departed souls are benefited by prayers offered for them. On the other hand, considered in a different way, the One Reality is the Self from whom has sprung the ego which contains within itself the seeds of predispositions acquired in previous births. The Self illumines the ego, the predispositions and also the gross senses, whereupon the predispositions appear to the senses to have materialised as the universe, and become perceptible to the ego, the reflection of the Self. The ego identifies itself with the body, and so loses sight of the Self and the result of this inadvertence is dark ignorance and the misery of the present life. The fact of the ego rising from the Self and forgetting it, is birth. So, it may be said that the birth of the individual has killed the mother. The present desire to regain one's mother is in reality the desire to regain the Self, which is the same as realising one-self, or the death of the ego; this is surrender unto the mother, so she may live eternally.

Maharshi then read out from the Tamil version of *Yoga Vasishta* the story of Deerga Tapasi who had two sons, Punya and Papa. After the death of the parents the younger one mourned the loss and the elder brother consoled him as follows: "Why do you mourn the loss of our parents? I shall tell you where they are; they are only within ourselves and are ourselves. For the life-current has passed through innumerable incarnations, births and deaths, pleasures and pains, etc., just as the water current in a river flows over rocks, pits, sands, elevations and depressions on its way, but still the current is unaffected. Again the pleasures and pains, births and deaths, are like undulations on the surface of seeming water in the mirage of the ego. The only reality is the Self from where the ego appears, and runs through thoughts which manifest themselves as the universe and in which the mothers and fathers, friends

and relatives appear and disappear. They are nothing but manifestations of the Self so that one's parents are not outside the Self. So there is no reason to mourn. Learn it, realise it and be happy."

24th January, 1935

Talk 17.

Mr. W. Y. Evans-Wentz, an English research scholar of Oxford University, brought a letter of introduction from Mr. Brunton and arrived on a visit.

He was tired after his journey and required rest. He is quite accustomed to Indian ways of living, having visited this country several times. He has learned the Tibetan language and helped in the translation of the "Book of the Dead" and the "Life of Milarepa", the greatest of Tibetan Yogis, and a third book on the "Tibetan Secret Doctrines."

In the afternoon he began to ask a few questions. They related to Yoga. He wanted to know if it was right to kill animals such as tigers, deer, etc., and use the skin for Yoga posture (*asana*).

M.: The mind is the tiger or the deer.

D.: If everything be illusion, then one can take lives?

M.: To whom is illusion? Find that out! In fact everyone is a "killer of the Self" (*atmahan*) every moment of his life.

D.: Which posture (*asana*) is the best?

M.: Any *asana*, possibly *sukha asana* (easy posture or the half-Buddha position). But that is immaterial for *jnana*, the Path of Knowledge.

D.: Does posture indicate the temperament?

M.: Yes.

D.: What are the properties and effects of the tiger's skin, wool, or deer-skin, etc.?

M.: Some have found them out and related them in Yoga books. They correspond to conductors and non-conductors of magnetism, etc. But it is all immaterial for the Path of Knowledge (*Jnana Marga*). Posture really means location and steadfastness in the Self. It is internal. The others refer to external positions.

D.: Which time is most suitable for meditation?

M.: What is time?

D.: Tell me what it is!

M.: Time is only an idea. There is only the Reality Whatever you think it is, it looks like that. If you call it time, it is time. If you call it existence, it is existence, and so on. After calling it time, you divide it into days and nights, months, years, hours, minutes, etc. Time is immaterial for the Path of Knowledge. But some of these rules and discipline are good for beginners.

D.: What is *Jnana Marga*?

M.: Concentration of the mind is in a way common to both Knowledge and Yoga. Yoga aims at union of the individual with the universal, the Reality. This Reality cannot be new. It must exist even now, and it does exist.

Therefore the Path of Knowledge tries to find out how *viyoga* (separation) came about. The separation is from the Reality only.

D.: What is illusion?

M.: To whom is the illusion? Find it out. Then illusion will vanish.

Generally people want to know about illusion and do not examine to whom it is. It is foolish. Illusion is outside and unknown. But the seeker is considered to be known and is inside. Find out what is immediate, intimate, instead of trying to find out what is distant and unknown.

D.: Does Maharshi advise any physical posture for the Europeans?

M.: It may be advisable. However, it must be clearly understood that meditation is not prohibited in the absence of *asanas*, or prescribed times, or any accessories of the kind.

D.: Does Maharshi have any particular method to impart to the Europeans in particular?

M.: It is according to the mental equipment of the individual. There is indeed no hard and fast rule.

Mr. Evans-Wentz began to ask questions, mostly relating to Yoga preliminaries, for all of which Maharshi replied that they are aids to Yoga, which is itself an aid to Self-realisation, the goal of all.

D.: Is work an obstruction to Self-realisation?

M.: No. For a realised being the Self alone is the Reality, and actions are only phenomenal, not affecting the Self. Even when he acts he has no sense of being an agent. His actions are only involuntary and he remains a witness to them without any attachment.

There is no aim for this action. Even one who is still practising the path of Wisdom (*jnana*) can practise while engaged in work. It may be difficult in the earlier stages for a beginner, but after some practice it will soon be effective and the work will not be found a hindrance to meditation.

D.: What is the practice?

M.: Constant search for 'I', the source of the ego. Find out 'Who am I?' The pure 'I' is the reality, the Absolute Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. When That is forgotten, all miseries crop up; when that is held fast, the miseries do not affect the person.

D.: Is not *brahmacharya* (celibacy) necessary for realisation of the Self?

M.: Brahmacharya is 'living in Brahman'. It has no connection with celibacy as commonly understood. A real *brahmachari*, that is one who lives in Brahman, finds bliss in the Brahman which is the same as the Self. Why then should you look for other sources of happiness? In fact the emergence from the Self has been the cause of all the misery.

D.: Celibacy is a *sine qua non* for Yoga?

M.: So it is. Celibacy is certainly an aid to realisation among so many other aids.

D.: Is it then not indispensable? Can a married man realise the Self?

M.: Certainly, it is a matter of fitness of mind. Married or unmarried, a man can realise the Self, because that is here and now. If it were not so, but attainable by some efforts at some other time, and if it were new and something to be acquired, it would not be worthy of pursuit. Because what is not natural cannot be permanent either. But what I say is that the Self is here and now and alone.

D.: God being immanent in all, one should not take life of any kind. Is society right in taking the life of a murderer? Can the State do so either? The Christian countries begin to think that it is wrong to do so.

M.: What is it that prompted the murderer to commit the crime? The same power awards him the punishment. Society or the State is only a tool in the hands of the power. You speak of one life taken away; But what about innumerable lives lost in wars?

D.: Quite so. Loss of lives is wrong anyway. Are wars justified?

M.: For a realised man, the one who remains ever in the Self, the loss of one or several or all lives either in this world or in all the three worlds makes no difference. Even if he happens to destroy them all, no sin can touch such a pure soul. Maharshi quoted the Gita, Chapter 18, Verse 17 - "He who is free from the notion of ego, whose intellect is unattached, though he annihilates all the worlds, he slayeth not, nor is he bound by the results of his actions."

D.: Do not one's actions affect the person in after-births?

M.: Are you born now? Why do you think of other births? The fact is that there is neither birth nor death. Let him who is born think of death and palliatives therefore.

D.: How long did it take Maharshi to realise the Self?

M.: This question is asked because the name and form are perceived. These are the perceptions consequent on the identification of the ego with the gross body.

If the ego identifies itself with the subtle mind, as in dream, the perceptions are subtle also. But in sleep there are no perceptions. Was there not the ego still? Unless it was, there cannot be the memory of having slept. Who was it that slept? You did not say in your sleep that you slept. You say it now in your wakeful state. The ego therefore is the same in wakefulness, dream and sleep. Find out the underlying Reality behind these states. That is the Reality underlying these. In that state there is Being alone. There is no you, nor I, nor he; no present, nor past, nor future. It is beyond time and space, beyond expression.

It is ever there.

Just as a plantain tree produces shoots at its roots, before yielding fruits and perishing, and these shoots, being transplanted, do the same again, so also the original primeval Master of antiquity (Dakshinamurti), who cleared the doubts of his rishi disciples in silence, has left shoots which are ever multiplying. The Guru is a

shoot of that Dakshinamurti. The question does not arise when the Self is realised.

D.: Does Maharshi enter the *nirvikalpa samadhi*?

M.: If the eyes are closed, it is *nirvikalpa*; if open, it is (though differentiated, still in absolute repose) *savikalpa*. The ever-present state is the natural state *sahaja*.

26th January, 1935

Talk 18.

Mr. Evans-Wentz asked: There are yogis with occult powers. What does Maharshi think of them?

M.: The powers are known by hearsay or by exhibition. Thus they are in the realm of the mind only.

D.: Mr. Brunton mentions a yogi in Madras who is said to hold communion with his master in the Himalayas.

M.: It is not more marvellous than telepathy - so commonly known. Telepathy cannot exist without the hearer and television without the seer. What is the difference between hearing from far and from near? It is only the hearer who matters. Without the hearer there cannot be hearing; without the seer there cannot be vision.

D.: So you want me to consider the subject and not the object.

M.: The subject and object appear only after the mind has arisen. The mind comprises them and also the occult powers.

D.: Can the manifestations of light (*jothis*) be seen on Arunachala Hill?

M.: Yes.

D.: Is there any psychic effect in visiting sacred places like Mt. Kailas, Benares, etc.?

M.: Yes.

D.: Is there any benefit accruing by dying in Benares?

M.: Yes, the meaning will be clear if the real Benares and real dying be understood.

D.: You mean that they are in the Self?

M.: Yes.

D.: There are six centres in the body and there are corresponding centres in the world.

M.: Yes. What is in the world is in the body; and what is in the body is in the world also.

D.: Is the sacredness of Benares a matter of faith, or is it externally also real?

M.: Both.

D.: Some people are attracted to one place of pilgrimage and others to another. Is it according to their temperaments?

M.: Yes. Just consider how all of you born in different places and living in other lands are gathered here today? What is the Force which has attracted you here? If this is understood the other Force is also understood.

29th January, 1935

Talk 19.

Mr. Grant Duff asked: Where are memory and forgetfulness located?

M.: In the mind (*chitta*).

30th January, 1935

Talk 20.

Mr. Evans-Wentz: Is solitude necessary for a *jnani*?

M.: Solitude is in the mind of man. One might be in the thick of the world and maintain serenity of mind; such a one is in solitude. Another may stay in a forest, but still be unable to control his mind. He cannot be said to be in solitude. Solitude is a function of the mind. A man attached to desire cannot get solitude wherever he may be; a detached man is always in solitude.

D.: So then, one might be engaged in work and be free from desire and keep up solitude. Is it so?

M.: Yes. Work performed with attachment is a shackle, whereas work performed with detachment does not affect the doer. He is, even while working, in solitude.

D.: They say that there are many saints in Tibet who remain in solitude and are still very helpful to the world. How can it be?

M.: It can be so. Realisation of the Self is the greatest help that can be rendered to humanity. Therefore, the saints are said to be helpful, though they remain in forests. But it should not be forgotten that solitude is not in forests only. It can be had even in towns, in the thick of worldly occupations.

D.: It is not necessary that the saints should mix with people and be helpful to them?

M.: The Self alone is the Reality; the world and the rest of it are not. The realised being does not see the world as different from himself.

D.: Thus then, the saint's realisation leads to the uplift of humanity without the latter being aware of it. Is it so?

M.: Yes. The help is imperceptible but is still there. A saint helps the whole of humanity, unknown to the latter.

D.: Would it not be better if he mixed with others?

M.: There are no others to mix with. The Self is the one and only Reality.

D.: If there be a hundred Self-realised men will it not be to the greater benefit of the world?

M.: When you say 'Self' you refer to the unlimited, but when you add 'men' to it, you limit the meaning. There is only one Infinite Self.

D.: Yes, yes, I see! Sri Krishna has said in the Gita that work must be performed without attachment and such work is better than idleness. Is it Karma Yoga?

M.: What is said is given out to suit the temperament of the hearers.

D.: In Europe it is not understood by the people that a man in solitude can be helpful. They imagine that men working in the world can alone be useful. When will this confusion cease? Will the European mind continue wading in the morass or will it realise the truth?

M.: Never mind Europe or America. Where are they except in your mind? Realise your Self and then all is realised.

If you dream and see several men, and then wake up and recall your dream, do you try to ascertain if the persons of your dream creation are also awake?

D.: What does Maharshi think of the theory of universal illusion (*Maya*)?

M.: What is *Maya*? It is only Reality.

D.: Is not *Maya* illusion?

M.: Maya is used to signify the manifestations of the Reality. Thus *Maya* is only Reality.

D.: Some say that Sri Sankaracharya was only intellectual and not realised. Is it so?

M.: Why worry about Sankaracharya? Realise your own Self. Others can take care of themselves.

D.: Jesus Christ cured people of their diseases. Is that only an occult power (*siddhi*)?

M.: Was Jesus aware at the time that he was curing men of their diseases? He could not have been conscious of his powers. There is a story related as follows: Jesus had once cured a man of his blindness. The man turned wicked, in course of time. Meeting him after some years, Jesus observed his wickedness and asked him why he was so. He replied saying that, when he was blind, he could not commit any sin. But after Jesus had cured him of blindness he grew wicked and Jesus was responsible for his wickedness.

D.: Was not Jesus a Perfected Being possessing occult powers (*siddhi*)?

M.: He could not have been aware of his powers (*siddhis*).

D.: Is it not good to acquire them, such as telepathy, etc.?

M.: Telepathy or radio enables one to see and hear from afar. They are all the same, hearing and seeing. Whether one hears from near or far does not make any difference in hearing. The fundamental factor is the hearer, the subject. Without the hearer or the seer, there can be no hearing or seeing. The latter are the functions of the mind. The occult powers (*siddhis*) are therefore only in the mind. They are not natural to the Self. That which is not natural, but acquired, cannot be permanent, and is not worth striving for.

They denote extended powers. A man is possessed of limited powers and is miserable; he wants to expand his powers so that he may be happy. But consider if it will be so; if with limited perceptions one

is miserable, with extended perceptions the misery must increase proportionately. Occult powers will not bring happiness to anyone, but will make him all the more miserable!

Moreover what are these powers for? The would-be occultist (*siddha*) desires to display the *siddhis* so that others may appreciate him. He seeks appreciation, and if it is not forthcoming he will not be happy. There must be others to appreciate him. He may even find another possessor of higher powers. That will cause jealousy and breed unhappiness. The higher occultist (*siddha*) may meet a still higher *siddha* and so on until there will come one who will blow up everything in a trice. Such is the highest adept (*siddha*) and He is God or the Self.

Which is the real power? Is it to increase prosperity or bring about peace? That which results in peace is the highest perfection (*siddhi*).

D.: But common people in Europe and America would not appreciate such an attitude and would desire a display of powers and instructions by lectures, etc.

M.: Lectures may entertain individuals for a few hours without improving them. Silence on the other hand is permanent and benefits the whole of humanity.

D.: But silence is not understood.

M.: It does not matter. By silence, eloquence is meant. Oral lectures are not so eloquent as silence. Silence is unceasing eloquence. The Primal Master, Dakshinamurti, is the ideal. He taught his *rishi* disciples by silence.

D.: But then there were disciples for Him. It was all right. Now it is different. They must be sought after and helped.

M.: That is a sign of ignorance. The power which created you has created the world. If it can take care of you, it can similarly take care of the world also.

D.: What does Bhagavan think of the "lost soul" mentioned by Jesus Christ?

M.: Think what there is to be lost. Is there anything to lose? What matters is only that which is natural. Such must be eternal and

cannot be experienced. That which is born must die; that which is acquired must be lost. Were you born? You are ever existent. The Self can never be lost.

D.: Buddha advises the eight-fold path as being the best so that none might be lost.

M.: Yes. Such is called Raja Yoga by the Hindus.

D.: Is yoga advised for a spiritual aspirant?

M.: Yoga helps control of mind.

D.: But does it not lead to occult powers (*siddhis*) which are said to be dangerous?

M.: But you qualified your question by the words "a spiritual aspirant". You did not mean a seeker of powers (*siddhis*).

31st January, 1935

Talk 21.

Mr. Ellappa Chettiar, a member of the Legislative Council of Madras Presidency and an influential Hindu, asked: "Why is it said that the knowledge born of hearing is not firm, whereas that born of contemplation is firm?"

M.: On the other hand it is said that hearsay knowledge (*paroksha*) is not firm, whereas that born of one's own realisation (*aparoksha*) is firm.

It is also said that hearing helps the intellectual understanding of the Truth, that meditation makes the understanding clear, and finally that contemplation brings about realisation of the Truth.

Furthermore, they say also that all such knowledge is not firm and that it is firm only when it is as clear and intimate as a gooseberry in the hollow of one's palm.

There are those who affirm that hearing alone will suffice, because a competent person who had already, perhaps in previous incarnations, qualified himself, realises and abides in peace as soon as he hears the Truth told him only once, whereas the person not so qualified must pass through the stages prescribed above, before falling into *samadhi*.

Talk 22.

Mrs. Piggott returned from Madras for a further visit. She asked questions relating to diet regulation.

D.: What diet is prescribed for a *sadhak* (one who is engaged in spiritual practices)?

M.: Satvic food in limited quantities.

D.: What is *satvic* food?

M.: Bread, fruits, vegetables, milk, etc.

D.: Some people take fish in North India. May it be done?

No answer was made by the Maharshi.

D.: We Europeans are accustomed to a particular diet; change of diet affects health and weakens the mind. Is it not necessary to keep up physical health?

M.: Quite necessary. The weaker the body the stronger the mind grows.

D.: In the absence of our usual diet our health suffers and the mind loses strength.

M.: What do you mean by strength of mind?

D.: The power to eliminate worldly attachment.

M.: The quality of food influences the mind. The mind feeds on the food consumed.

D.: Really! How can the Europeans adjust themselves to *satvic* food only?

M.: (Pointing to Mr. Evans-Wentz) You have been taking our food. Do you feel uncomfortable on that account?

Mr. Evans-Wentz: No. Because I am accustomed to it.

D.: What about those not so accustomed?

M.: Habit is only adjustment to the environment. It is the mind that matters. The fact is that the mind has been trained to think certain foods tasty and good. The food material is to be had both in vegetarian and non-vegetarian diet equally well. But the mind desires such food as it is accustomed to and considers tasty.

D.: Are there restrictions for the realised man in a similar manner?

M.: No. He is steady and not influenced by the food he takes.

D.: Is it not killing life to prepare meat diet?

M.: Ahimsa stands foremost in the code of discipline for the yogis.

D.: Even plants have life.

M.: So too the slabs you sit on!

D.: May we gradually get ourselves accustomed to vegetarian food?

M.: Yes. That is the way.

2nd February, 1935

Talk 23.

Mr. Evans-Wentz continued another day: "May one have more than one spiritual master?"

M.: Who is a Master? He is the Self after all. According to the stages of the development of the mind the Self manifests as the Master externally. The famous ancient saint Avadhuta said that he had more than 24 Masters. The Master is one from whom one learns anything. The Guru may be sometimes inanimate also, as in the case of Avadhuta. God, Guru and the Self are identical.

A spiritual-minded man thinks that God is all-pervading and takes God for his Guru. Later, God brings him in contact with a personal Guru and the man recognises him as all in all. Lastly the same man is made by the grace of the Master to feel that his Self is the Reality and nothing else. Thus he finds that the Self is the Master.

D.: Does Sri Bhagavan initiate his disciples?

Maharshi kept silent.

Thereafter one of the devotees took it upon himself to answer, saying, "Maharshi does not see anyone as outside his Self. So there are no disciples for him. His Grace is all-pervading and He communicates his Grace to any deserving individual in silence."

D.: How does book-lore help in Self-Realisation?

A.: Only so far as to make one spiritually-minded.

D.: How far does intellect help?

A.: Only so far as to make one sink the intellect in the ego, and the ego in the Self.

4th February, 1935

Talk 24.

Mrs. Piggott: Why do you take milk, but not eggs?

M.: The domesticated cows yield more milk than necessary for their calves and they find it a pleasure to be relieved of the milk.

D.: But the hen cannot contain the eggs?

M.: But there are potential lives in them.

D.: Thoughts cease suddenly, then 'I-I' rises up as suddenly and continues. It is only in the feeling and not in the intellect. Can it be right?

M.: It is certainly right. Thoughts must cease and reason disappear for 'I-I' to rise up and be felt. Feeling is the prime factor and not reason.

D.: Moreover it is not in the head but in the right side of the chest.

M.: It ought to be so. Because the heart is there.

D.: When I see outside it disappears. What is to be done?

M.: It must be held tight.

D.: If one is active with such remembrance, will the actions be always right?

M.: They ought to be. However, such a person is not concerned with the right or wrong of his actions. Such a person's actions are God's and therefore they must be right.

D.: Why then the restrictions of food given for such?

M.: Your present experience is due to the influence of the atmosphere you are in. Can you have it outside this atmosphere? The experience is spasmodic. Until it becomes permanent practice is necessary. Restrictions of food are aids for such experience to be repeated. After one gets established in truth the restrictions drop away naturally. Moreover, food influences the mind and it must be kept pure.

The lady told a disciple later: "I feel the vibrations from him more intensely and I am able to reach the 'I' centre more readily than before."

Talk 25.

On a former occasion B. V. Narasimha Swami, author of *Self-Realization*, asked: Who am I? How is it to be found?

M.: Ask yourself the question. The body (*annamaya kosa*) and its functions are not 'I'.

Going deeper, the mind (*manomaya kosa*) and its functions are not 'I'.

The next step takes on to the question. "Wherefrom do these thoughts arise?" The thoughts are spontaneous, superficial or analytical. They operate in intellect. Then, who is aware of them? The existence of thoughts, their clear conceptions and their operations become evident to the individual. The analysis leads to the conclusion that the individuality of the person is operative as the perceiver of the existence of thoughts and of their sequence. This individuality is the ego, or as people say 'I'. *Vijnanamaya kosa* (intellect) is only the sheath of 'I' and not the 'I' itself.

Enquiring further the questions arise, "Who is this 'I'? Wherefrom does it come?" 'I' was not aware in sleep. Simultaneously with its rise sleep changes to dream or wakefulness. But I am not concerned with dream just now. Who am I now, in the wakeful state? If I originated from sleep, then the 'I' was covered up with ignorance. Such an ignorant 'I' cannot be what the scriptures say or the wise ones affirm. 'I' am beyond even 'Sleep'; 'I' must be now and here and what I was all along in sleep and dreams also, without the qualities of such states. 'I' must therefore be the unqualified substratum underlying these three states (*anandamaya kosa* transcended).

'I' is, in brief, beyond the five sheaths. Next, the residuum left over after discarding all that is not-self is the Self, *Sat-Chit-Ananda*.

D.: How is that Self to be known or realised?

M.: Transcend the present plane of relativity. A separate being (Self) appears to know something apart from itself (non-Self). That is, the subject is aware of the object. The seer is *drik*; the seen is *drisya*.

There must be a unity underlying these two, which arises as 'ego'. This ego is of the nature of *chit* (intelligence); *achit* (insentient object) is only negation of *chit*. Therefore the underlying essence is

akin to the subject and not the object. Seeking the *drik,* until all *drisya* disappears, the *drik* will become subtler and subtler until the absolute *drik* alone survives. This process is called *drisya vilaya* (the disappearance of the objective world).

D.: Why should the objects *drisya* be eliminated? Cannot the Truth be realised even keeping the object as it is?

M.: No. Elimination of *drisya* means elimination of separate identities of the subject and object. The object is unreal. All *drisya* (including ego) is the object. Eliminating the unreal, the Reality survives. When a rope is mistaken for a snake, it is enough to remove the erroneous perception of the snake for the truth to be revealed. Without such elimination the truth will not dawn.

D.: When and how is the disappearance of the objective world (*drisya vilaya*) to be effected?

M.: It is complete when the relative subject, namely the mind, is eliminated. The mind is the creator of the subject and the object and is the cause of the dualistic idea. Therefore, it is the cause of the wrong notion of limited self and the misery consequent on such erroneous idea.

D.: What is this mind?

M.: Mind is one form of manifestation of life. A block of wood or a subtle machine is not called mind. The vital force manifests as life-activity and also as the conscious phenomena known as the mind.

D.: What is the relation between mind and object? Is the mind contacting something different from it, *viz*., the world?

M.: The world is 'sensed' in the waking and the dream states or is the object of perception and thought, both being mental activities. If there were no such activities as waking and dreaming thought, there would be no 'perception' or inference of a 'world'. In sleep there is no such activity and 'objects and world' do not exist for us in sleep. Hence 'reality of the world' may be created by the ego by its act of emergence from sleep; and that reality may be swallowed up or disappear by the soul resuming its nature in sleep. The emergence and disappearance of the world are like the spider producing a gossamer web and then withdrawing it. The spider here underlies all

the three states - waking, dreaming, and sleep; such a spider in the person is called *Atman* (Self), whereas the same with reference to the world (which is considered to issue from the sun) is called Brahman (Supreme Spirit). He that is in man is the same as He that is in the sun. (*Sa yaschayam purushe yaschasavaditye sa ekah*).

While Self or Spirit is unmanifest and inactive, there are no relative doubles; *e.g*., subject and object - *drik* and *drisya*. If the enquiry into the ultimate cause of manifestation of mind itself is pushed on, mind will be found to be only the manifestation of the Real which is otherwise called Atman or Brahman. The mind is termed *sukshma sarira* or 'subtle-body'; and *jiva* is the individual soul. The *jiva* is the essence of the growth of individuality; personality is referred to as *jiva*. Thought or mind is said to be its phase, or one of the ways in which the *jiva* manifests itself - the earlier stage or phase of such manifestation being vegetative life. This mind is always seen as being related to, or acting on, some non-mind or matter, and never by itself. Therefore mind and matter co-exist.

Talk 26.

D.: How shall we discover the nature of the mind *i.e*., its ultimate cause, or the noumenon of which it is a manifestation?

M.: Arranging thoughts in the order of value, the 'I' thought is the all-important thought. Personality-idea or thought is also the root or the stem of all other thoughts, since each idea or thought arises only as someone's thought and is not known to exist independently of the ego. The ego therefore exhibits thought-activity. The second and the third persons do not appear except to the first person. Therefore they arise only after the first person appears, so all the three persons seem to rise and sink together. Trace, then, the ultimate cause of 'I' or personality. The 'I' idea arises to an embodied ego and should be related to a body or organism. Has it a location in the body or a special relation to any particular spot, as speech which has its centre in the brain or amativeness in the brain? Similarly, has 'I' got any centre in the brain, blood, or viscera? Thought-life is seen to centre round the brain and the spinal-cord which in turn are fed by the blood circulating in them, carrying food and air duly mixed up which are transformed into nerve matter. Thus, vegetative life - including

circulation, respiration, alimentation, etc. - or vital force, is said to be (or reside in) the core or essence of the organism. Thus the mind may be regarded as the manifestation of vital force which again may be conceived as residing the Heart.

D.: Now for the art of eliminating the mind and developing intuition in its stead, are they two distinct stages with a possible neutral ground which is neither mind nor intuition? Or does the absence of mental activity necessarily involve Self-Realisation?

M.: To the *abhyasi* (practitioner) there are two distinctive stages. There is a neutral ground of sleep, coma, faint, insanity, etc., in which the mental operations either do not exist or consciousness of Self does not prevail.

D.: Taking the first part first, how is the mind to be eliminated or relative consciousness transcended?

M.: The mind is by nature restless. Begin liberating it from its restlessness; give it peace; make it free from distractions; train it to look inward; make this a habit. This is done by ignoring the external world and removing the obstacles to peace of mind.

D.: How is restlessness removed from the mind?

M.: External contacts - contacts with objects other than itself - make the mind restless. Loss of interest in non-Self, (*vairagya*) is the first step. Then the habits of introspection and concentration follow. They are characterised by control of external senses, internal faculties, etc. (*sama, dama*, etc.) ending in *samadhi* (undistracted mind).

Talk *27.*

D.: How are they practised?

M.: An examination of the ephemeral nature of external phenomena leads to *vairagya*. Hence enquiry (*vichara*) is the first and foremost step to be taken. When *vichara* continues automatically, it results in a contempt for wealth, fame, ease, pleasure, etc. The 'I' thought becomes clearer for inspection. The source of 'I' is the Heart - the final goal. If, however, the aspirant is not temperamentally suited to *Vichara Marga* (to the introspective analytical method), he must develop *bhakti* (devotion) to an ideal - may be God, Guru, humanity

in general, ethical laws, or even the idea of beauty. When one of these takes possession of the individual, other attachments grow weaker, *i.e*., dispassion (*vairagya*) develops. Attachment for the ideal simultaneously grows and finally holds the field. Thus *ekagrata* (concentration) grows simultaneously and imperceptibly - with or without visions and direct aids.

In the absence of enquiry and devotion, the natural sedative *pranayama* (breath regulation) may be tried. This is known as *Yoga Marga*. If life is imperilled the whole interest centres round the one point, the saving of life. If the breath is held the mind cannot afford to (and does not) jump at its pets - external objects. Thus there is rest for the mind so long as the breath is held. All attention being turned on breath or its regulation, other interests are lost. Again, passions are attended with irregular breathing, whereas calm and happiness are attended with slow and regular breathing. Paroxysm of joy is in fact as painful as one of pain, and both are accompanied by ruffled breaths. Real peace is happiness. Pleasures do not form happiness. The mind improves by practice and becomes finer just as the razor's edge is sharpened by stropping. The mind is then better able to tackle internal or external problems. If an aspirant be unsuited temperamentally for the first two methods and circumstantially (on account of age) for the third method, he must try the Karma *Marga* (doing good deeds, for example, social service). His nobler instincts become more evident and he derives impersonal pleasure. His smaller self is less assertive and has a chance of expanding its good side. The man becomes duly equipped for one of the three aforesaid paths. His intuition may also develop directly by this single method.

D.: Can a line of thought or a series of questions induce Self-hypnotism? Should it not be reduced to a single point analysing the unanalysable, elementary and vaguely perceived and elusive 'I'?

M.: Yes. It is really like gazing into vacancy or a dazzling crystal or light.

D.: Can the mind be fixed to that point? How?

M.: If the mind is distracted, ask the question promptly, "To whom do these distracting thoughts arise?" That takes you back to the 'I' point promptly.

D.: How long can the mind stay or be kept in the Heart?

M.: The period extends by practice.

D.: What happens at the end of the period?

M.: The mind returns to the present normal state. Unity in the Heart is replaced by variety of phenomena perceived. This is called the outgoing mind. The heart-going mind is called the resting mind.

D.: Is all this process merely intellectual or does it exhibit feeling predominantly?

M.: The latter.

D.: How do all thoughts cease when the mind is in the Heart?

M.: By force of will, with strong faith in the truth of the Master's teaching to that effect.

D.: What is the good of this process?

M..: (a) Conquest of the will - development of concentration.

(b) Conquest of passions - development of dispassion.

(c) Increased practice of virtue - (*samatva*) equality to all.

D.: Why should one adopt this self-hypnotism by thinking on the unthinkable point? Why not adopt other methods like gazing into light, holding the breath, hearing music, hearing internal sounds, repetition of the sacred syllable (*Pranava*) or other *mantras*?

M.: Light-gazing stupefies the mind and produces catalepsy of the will for the time being, yet secures no permanent benefit. Breath control benumbs the will for the time being only. Sound-hearing produces similar results - unless the *mantra* is sacred and secures the help of a higher power to purify and raise the thoughts.

Talk 28.

D.: What is the interrelation between regulation of thought and regulation of breath?

M.: Thought (intellectual) and respiration, circulation, etc. (vegetative) activities are both different aspects of the same - the individual life. Both depend upon (or metaphorically 'reside' or 'inhere' in) life. Personality and other ideas spring from it like the vital activity. If respiration or other vital activity is forcibly repressed, thought also

is repressed. If thought is forcibly slowed down and pinned to a point, the vital activity of respiration is slowed down, made even and confined to the lowest level compatible with life. In both cases the distracting variety of thought is temporarily at an end. The interaction is noticeable in other ways also. Take the will to live. That is thought-power. That sustains and keeps up life when other vitality is almost exhausted and delays death. In the absence of such will-power death is accelerated. So thought is said to carry life with it in the flesh and from one fleshy body to another.

D.: Are there any aids to (1) concentration and (2) casting off distractions?

M.: Physically the digestive and other organs are kept free from irritation. Therefore food is regulated both in quantity and quality. Non-irritants are eaten, avoiding chillies, excess of salt, onions, wine, opium, etc. Avoid constipation, drowsiness and excitement, and all foods which induce them. Mentally take interest in one thing and fix the mind on it. Let such interest be all-absorbing to the exclusion of everything else. This is dispassion (*vairagya*) and concentration. God or *mantra* may be chosen. The mind gains strength to grasp the subtle and merge into it.

D.: Distractions result from inherited tendencies. Can they be cast off too?

M.: Yes. Many have done so. Believe it! They did so because they believed they could. *Vasanas* (predispositions) can be obliterated. It is done by concentration on that which is free from *vasanas* and yet is their core.

D.: How long is the practice to continue?

M.: Till success is achieved and until yoga-liberation becomes permanent. Success begets success. If one distraction is conquered the next is conquered and so on, until all are finally conquered. The process is like reducing an enemy's fort by slaying its man-power - one by one, as each issues out.

D.: What is the goal of this process?

M.: Realising the Real.

D.: What is the nature of the Reality?

M.: (a) Existence without beginning or end - eternal.

(b) Existence everywhere, endless, infinite.

(c) Existence underlying all forms, all changes, all forces, all matter and all spirit.

The many change and pass away (phenomena), whereas the One always endures (noumenon).

(d) The one displacing the triads, *i.e*., the knower, the knowledge and the known. The triads are only appearances in time and space, whereas the Reality lies beyond and behind them. They are like a mirage over the Reality. They are the result of delusion.

D.: If 'I' also be an illusion, who then casts off the illusion?

M.: The 'I' casts off the illusion of 'I' and yet remains as 'I'. Such is the paradox of Self-Realisation. The realised do not see any contradiction in it. Take the case of *bhakti* - I approach Iswara and pray to be absorbed in Him. I then surrender myself in faith and by concentration. What remains afterwards? In place of the original 'I', perfect self-surrender leaves a residuum of God in which the 'I' is lost. This is the highest form of devotion (*parabhakti*), *prapatti*, surrender or the height of *vairagya*.

You give up this and that of 'my' possessions. If you give up 'I' and 'Mine' instead, all are given up at a stroke. The very seed of possession is lost. Thus the evil is nipped in the bud or crushed in the germ itself. Dispassion (*vairagya*) must be very strong to do this. Eagerness to do it must be equal to that of a man kept under water trying to rise up to the surface for his life.

D.: Cannot this trouble and difficulty be lessened with the aid of a Master or an *Ishta Devata* (God chosen for worship)? Cannot they give the power to see our Self as it is - to change us into themselves - to take us into Self-Realisation?

M.: Ishta Devata and Guru are aids - very powerful aids on this path. But an aid to be effective requires your effort also. Your effort is a *sine qua non*. It is you who should see the sun. Can spectacles and the sun see for you? You yourself have to see your true nature. Not much aid is required for doing it!

D.: What is the relation between my free-will and the overwhelming might of the Omnipotent?

(a) Is omniscience of God consistent with ego's freewill?

(b) Is omnipotence of God consistent with ego's freewill?

(c) Are the natural laws consistent with God's free-will?

M.: Yes. Free-will is the present appearing to a limited faculty of sight and will. The same ego sees its past activity as falling into a course of 'law' or rules - its own free-will being one of the links in that course of law.

Omnipotence and omniscience of God are then seen by the ego to have acted through the appearance of his own free-will. So he comes to the conclusion that the ego must go by appearances. Natural laws are manifestations of God's will and they have been laid down.

D.: Is the study of science, psychology, physiology, philosophy, etc. helpful for:-

(1) this art of yoga-liberation.

(2) the intuitive grasp of the unity of the Real?

M.: Very little. Some knowledge is needed for yoga and it may be found in books. But practical application is the thing needed, and personal example, personal touch and personal instructions are the most helpful aids. As for the other, a person may laboriously convince himself of the truth to be intuited, *i.e.*, its function and nature, but the actual intuition is akin to feeling and requires practice and personal contact. Mere book learning is not of any great use. After realisation all intellectual loads are useless burdens and are thrown overboard as jetsam. Jettisoning the ego is necessary and natural.

D.: How does dream differ from waking?

M.: In dreams one takes on different bodies, and they re-enter this body when one dreams of sense-contacts.

D.: What is happiness? Is it inhering in the Atman or in the object, or in the contact between the subject and the object? But we do not see happiness in our affairs. When does It actually arise?

M.: When there is contact of a desirable sort or memory thereof, and when there is freedom from undesirable contacts or memory thereof, we say there is happiness. Such happiness is relative and is better called pleasure.

But men want absolute and permanent happiness. This does not reside in objects, but in the Absolute. It is Peace free from pain and pleasure - it is a neutral state.

D.: In what sense is happiness our real nature?

M.: Perfect Bliss is Brahman. Perfect Peace is of the Self. That alone exists and is conscious. The same conclusion is arrived at: (a) judged metaphysically, and (b) inferred by *Bhakti Marga* (Path of Devotion).

We pray to God for Bliss and receive it by Grace. The bestower of bliss must be Bliss itself and also Infinite. Therefore, *Iswara* is the Personal God of infinite power and bliss. Brahman is Bliss, impersonal and absolute. The finite egos, deriving their source from Brahman and then *Iswara*, are in their spiritual nature bliss only. Biologically, an organism functions because such functions are attended with happiness.

It is pleasure that helps our growth; food, exercise, rest, and gregarious qualities. The psychology (and metaphysics) of pleasure is perhaps this; Our nature is primarily one, entire, blissful. Take this as a probable hypothesis. Creation is by the entire Godhead breaking into God and Nature (*maya* or *prakriti*). This *maya* is of two parts: (*para*) - the supporting essence and (*apara*) the five elements, mind, intellect, and ego (eightfold).

Ego's perfection is suddenly broken at a point and a want is felt giving rise to a desire to get something or do something. When that want is cured by the fulfilment of that desire, the ego is happy and the original perfection is restored. Therefore happiness may be said to be our natural condition or nature. Pleasure and pain are relative and refer to our finite state, with progress by satisfaction of want. If relative progress is stopped and the soul merges into Brahman - of the nature of perfect peace - that soul ceases to have relative, temporary pleasure and enjoys perfect peace - Bliss. Hence Self-Realisation is Bliss; it is realizing the Self as the limitless spiritual eye (*jnana dristi*) and not clairvoyance; it is the highest self-surrender. *Samsara* (the world-cycle) is sorrow.

D.: Why then is *samsara* - creation and manifestation as finitised - so full of sorrow and evil?

M.: God's will!

D.: Why does God will it so?

M.: It is inscrutable. No motive can be attributed to that Power - no desire, no end to achieve can be asserted of that one Infinite, All-wise and All-powerful Being. God is untouched by activities, which take place in His presence; compare the sun and the world activities. There is no meaning in attributing responsibility and motive to the One before it becomes many. But God's will for the prescribed course of events is a good solution of the free-will problem (*vexata quaestio*). If the mind is restless on account of a sense of the imperfect and unsatisfactory character of what befalls us or what is committed or omitted by us, then it is wise to drop the sense of responsibility and free-will by regarding ourselves as the ordained instruments of the All-wise and All-powerful, to do and suffer as He pleases. He carries all burdens and gives us peace.

Talk *29.*

On another occasion, the evening was calm and cloudy. It was drizzling occasionally and somewhat cool in consequence. The windows of the Asramam Hall were closed and Maharshi was seated as usual on the sofa. Facing him sat the devotees. Some visitors had come from Cuddalore. A Sub-Judge, accompanied by two elderly ladies, was among them. The Sub-Judge began the discussion as to the impermanence of all mundane things, by putting the question. "Has the discrimination between Reality and Unreality (*Sat asat vicharana*) the efficacy in itself to lead us to the realisation of the one Imperishable?"

M.: As propounded by all and realised by all true seekers, fixity in the Supreme Spirit (*Brahma nishta*) alone can make us know and realise it. It being of us and in us, any amount of discrimination (*vivechana*) can lead us only one step forward, by making us renouncers, by goading us to discard the seeming (*abhasa*) as transitory and to hold fast to the eternal truth and presence alone.

The conversation turned upon the question as to whether *Iswara Prasad* (Divine Grace) is necessary for the attaining of *samrajya* (universal dominion) or whether a *jiva's* honest and strenuous efforts to attain it cannot of themselves lead him to That from whence is no return to life and death. The Maharshi with an ineffable smile

which lit up His Holy Face and which was all-pervasive, shining upon the coterie around him, replied in tones of certainty and with the ring of truth; "Divine Grace is essential for Realisation. It leads one to God-realisation. But such Grace is vouchsafed only to him who is a true devotee or a yogin, who has striven hard and ceaselessly on the path towards freedom."

D.: There are six centres mentioned in the Yoga books; but the *jiva* is said to reside in the Heart. Is it not so?

M.: Yes. The *jiva* is said to remain in the Heart in deep sleep; and in the brain in the waking state. The Heart need not be taken to be the muscular cavity with four chambers which propels blood. There are indeed passages which support the view. There are others who take it to mean a set of ganglia or nerve centres about that region. Whichever view is correct does not matter to us. We are not concerned with anything less than ourselves. That we have certainly within us. There could be no doubts or discussions about that.

The Heart is used in the Vedas and the scriptures to denote the place whence the notion 'I' springs. Does it spring only from the fleshy ball? It springs within us somewhere right in the middle of our being. The 'I' has no location. Everything is the Self. There is nothing but that. So the Heart must be said to be the entire body of ourselves and of the entire universe, conceived as 'I'. But to help the practiser (*abhyasi*) we have to indicate a definite part of the Universe, or of the Body. So this Heart is pointed out as the seat of the Self. But in truth we are everywhere, we are all that is, and there is nothing else.

D.: It is said that Divine Grace is necessary to attain successful undistracted mind (*samadhi*). Is that so?

M.: We are God (*Iswara*). *Iswara Drishti* (*i.e.*, seeing ourselves as God) is itself Divine Grace. So we need Divine Grace to get God's Grace.

Maharshi smiles and all devotees laugh together.

D.: There is also Divine Favour (*Iswara anugraham*) as distinct from Divine Grace (*Iswara prasadam*). Is that so?

M.: The thought of God is Divine Favour! He is by nature Grace (*prasad* or *arul*). It is by God's Grace that you think of God.

D.: Is not the Master's Grace the result of God's Grace?

M.: Why distinguish between the two? The Master is the same as God and not different from him.

D.: When an endeavour is made to lead the right life and to concentrate thought on the Self, there is often a downfall and break. What is to be done?

M.: It will come all right in the end. There is the steady impulse of your determination that sets you on your feet again after every downfall and breakdown. Gradually the obstacles are all overcome and your current becomes stronger. Everything comes right in the end. Steady determination is what is required.

Talk 30.

Mr. N. Natesa Iyer, the leader of the Bar in a South Indian town, an orthodox Brahmin, asked: "Are the gods *Iswara* or *Vishnu* and their sacred regions *Kailasa* or *Vaikuntha* real?

M.: As real as you are in this body.

D.: Do they possess a *vyavahara satya, i.e.*, phenomenal existence, like my body? Or are they fictions like the horn of a hare?

M.: They do exist.

D.: If so, they must be somewhere. Where are they?

M.: Persons who have seen them say that they exist somewhere. So we must accept their statement.

D.: Where do they exist?

M.: In you.

D.: Then it is only idea - that which I can create and control?

M.: Everything is like that.

D.: But I can create pure fictions *e.g.*, hare's horn or only part truths, *e.g.* mirage, while there are also facts irrespective of my imagination. Do the gods *Iswara* or *Vishnu* exist like that?

M.: Yes.

D.: Is He subject to *pralaya* (cosmic dissolution)?

M.: Why? Man becoming aware of the Self transcends cosmic dissolution (*pralaya*) and becomes liberated (*mukta*). Why not God (*Iswara*) who is infinitely wiser and abler?

D.: Do *devas* and *pisachas* (devils) exist similarly?

M.: Yes.

D.: How are we to conceive of Supreme Consciousness (*Chaitanya Brahman*)?

M.: As that which is.

D.: Should it be thought of as Self-Effulgent?

M.: It transcends light and darkness. An individual (*jiva*) sees both. The Self enlightens the individual to see light and darkness.

D.: Should it be realised as "I am not the body, nor the agent, nor the enjoyer, etc."?

M.: Why these thoughts? Do we now think that we are men, etc.? By not thinking so, do we cease to be men?

D.: Should one realise it then by the scriptural text such as "There are no differences here".

नेह नानास्ति किंचन

M.: Why even that?

D.: If we think "I am the real," will it do?

M.: All thoughts are inconsistent with realisation. The correct state is to exclude thoughts of ourselves and all other thoughts. Thought is one thing and realisation is quite another.

D.: Is it not necessary or at least advantageous to render the body invisible in one's spiritual progress?

M.: Why do you think of that? Are you the body?

D.: No. But advanced spirituality must effect a change in the body. Is it not so?

M.: What change do you desire in the body, and why?

D.: Is not invisibility evidence of advanced Wisdom (*jnana*)?

M.: In that case, all those who spoke, who wrote and who passed their lives in the sight of others must be considered ignorant (*ajnanis*)!

D.: But the sages Vasistha and Valmiki possessed such powers?

M.: It might have been their fate (*prarabdha*) to develop such powers (*siddhis*) side by side with their wisdom (*jnana*). Why should you aim at that which is not essential but apt to prove a hindrance

to wisdom (*jnana*)? Does the Sage (*jnani*) feel oppressed by his body being visible?

D.: No.

M.: A hypnotist can render himself suddenly invisible. Is he therefore a Sage (*jnani*)?

D.: No.

M.: Visibility and invisibility refer to a seer. Who is that seer? Solve that first. Other matters are unimportant.

D.: The Vedas contain conflicting accounts of Cosmogony. Ether is said to be the first creation in one place; vital energy (*prana*) in another place; something else in yet another; water in still another, and so on. How are these to be reconciled? Do not these impair the credibility of the Vedas?

M.: Different seers saw different aspects of truths at different times, each emphasising some one view. Why do you worry about their conflicting statements? The essential aim of the Veda is to teach us the nature of the imperishable Atman and show us that we are That.

D.: I am satisfied with that portion.

M.: Then treat all the rest as *artha vada* (auxiliary arguments) or expositions for the sake of the ignorant who seek to trace the genesis of things and matters.

D.: I am a sinner. I do not perform religious sacrifices (*homas*), etc. Shall I have painful rebirths for that reason? Pray save me!

M.: Why do you say that you are a sinner? Your trust in God is sufficient to save you from rebirths. Cast all burden on Him.

In the *Tiruvachagam* it is said: "Though I am worse than a dog, you have graciously undertaken to protect me. This delusion of birth and death is maintained by you. Moreover, am I the person to sift and judge? Am I the Lord here? Oh Maheswara! It is for you to roll me through bodies (by births and deaths) or to keep me fixed at your own feet." Therefore have faith and that will save you.

D.: Sir, I have faith - and still I encounter difficulties. Weakness and giddiness afflict me after I practise concentration.

M.: Breath-control (*pranayama*) properly performed should increase one's strength.

D.: I have my professional work and yet I want to be in perpetual *dhyana*. Will they conflict with each other?

M.: There will be no conflict. As you practise both and develop your powers you will be able to attend to both. You will begin to look on business as a dream. Says the Bhagavad Gita: "That which is the night of all beings, for the disciplined man is the time of waking; when other beings are waking, then is it night for the sage who seeth." (11.69.)

Talk 31.

A visitor asked: What to do to get liberation (*moksha*)?

M.: Learn what liberation is.

D.: Should I do worship (*upasana*) for it?

M.: Worship is for mind control (*chitta nirodha*) and concentration.

D.: Should I do idol worship? Is there any harm in it?

M.: So long as you think you are the body there is no harm.

D.: How to get over the cycle of births and deaths?

M.: Learn what it means.

D.: Should I not leave my wife and family?

M.: How do they harm you? First find out who you are.

D.: Should not one give up wife, wealth, home?

M.: Learn first what *samsara* is. Is all that *samsara*? Have there not been men living among them and getting realisation?

D.: What are the steps of practical training (*sadhana*) for it?

M.: It depends on the qualifications and the nature of the seeker.

D.: I am doing idol worship.

M.: Go on with it. It leads to concentration of mind. Get one-pointed. All will come out right. People think that freedom (*moksha*) is somewhere yonder and should be sought out. They are wrong. Freedom (*moksha*) is only knowing the Self within yourself. Concentrate and you will get it. Your mind is the cycle of births and deaths (*samsara*).

D.: My mind is very unsteady. What should I do?

M.: Fix your attention on any single thing and try to hold on to it. All will be right.

D.: I find concentration difficult.

M.: Go on practising. Your concentration will be as easy as breathing. That will be the crown of your achievements.

D.: Are not abstinence and pure food helpful?

M.: Yes, all that is good. (Then Maharshi concentrates and silently gazes at vacancy, and thus sets an example to the questioner).

D.: Do I not require Yoga?

M.: What is it but the means to concentration?

D.: To help concentration, is it not good to have some aids?

M.: Breath-regulation, etc., are such helps.

D.: Is it not possible to get a vision of God?

M.: Yes. You see this and that. Why not see God? Only you must know what God is. All are seeing God always. But they do not know it. You find out what God is. People see, yet see not, because they know not God.

D.: Should I not go on with repetition of sacred syllables, (*mantra japa*), *e.g*., Krishna or Rama's name, when I worship images?

M.: Mental *japa* is very good. That helps meditation. Mind gets identified with the repetition and then you get to know what worship (*puja*) really is - the losing of one's individuality in that which is worshipped.

D.: Is the Universal Soul (*Paramatma*) always different from us?

M.: That is the common belief, but it is wrong. Think of Him as not different from you, and then you achieve identity of Self with God.

D.: Is it not the *Advaita* doctrine to become one with God?

M.: Where is becoming? The thinker is all the while the Real. He ultimately realises the fact. Sometimes we forget our identities, as in sleep and dreams. But God is perpetual consciousness.

D.: Is not the Master's guidance necessary, besides idol worship?

M.: How did you start it without advice?

D.: From sacred books (*puranas*).

M.: Yes. Someone tells you of God, or Bhagavan Himself tells you. In the latter case God Himself is your Master. What matters it who the Master is? We really are one with Master or Bhagavan. The Master is God; one discovers it in the end. There is no difference between human-guru and God-guru.

D.: If we have done virtuous action (*punya*) the achievement will not leave us. I hope.

M.: You will reap your destiny (*prarabdha*) that way.

D.: Will not a Wise Master be a great help in pointing out the way?

M.: Yes. If you go on working with the light available, you will meet your Master, as he himself will be seeking you.

D.: Is there a difference between *prapatti* (self-surrender) and the Path of Yoga of the Seers?

M.: Jnana Marga and *Bhakti Marga* (*prapatti*) are one and the same. Self-surrender leads to realisation just as enquiry does. Complete self-surrender means that you have no further thought of 'I'. Then all your predispositions (*samskaras*) are washed off and you are free. You should not continue as a separate entity at the end of either course.

D.: Do not we go to Heaven (*svarga*), etc. as the result of our actions?

M.: That is as true as the present existence. But if we enquire who we are and discover the Self, what need is there to think of heaven, etc.?

D.: Should I not try to escape rebirth?

M.: Yes. Find out who is born and who has the trouble of existence now. When you are asleep do you think of rebirths or even the present existence, etc.? So find out whence the present problem arises and there is the solution also. You will discover that there is no birth, no present trouble or unhappiness, etc. All is That; All is Bliss; we are freed from rebirth in fact. Why fret over the misery of rebirth?

Talk 32.

A visitor: The saints Sri Chaitanya and Sri Ramakrishna wept before God and achieved success. Is that not the path to follow?

M.: Yes. There was a powerful force (*sakti*) drawing them on through all those experiences. Trust in that huge power to take you on to

your goal. Tears are often considered a sign of weakness. These great persons were certainly not weak. These manifestations are only passing signs of the great current carrying them on. We must look to the end achieved.

D.: Can this physical body be made to disappear into nothingness?

M.: Why this question? Can you not find out if you are the body?

D.: Can we have disappearance from sight (*antardhana*) like the yogis Vasishta or Viswamitra?

M.: These are only physical matters. Is that the essential object of our interest? Are you not the Self? Why trouble about other matters? Take the essence; reject other learned theories as useless. They who think that physical disappearance counts in freedom are mistaken. No such thing is needed. You are not the body; what does it matter if it disappears in one way or another? There is no great merit in such phenomena. In what does superiority or inferiority consist? Achievement of the Real alone matters. The loss of the 'I' is the main fact, and not the loss of the body. Identity of the Self with the body is the real bondage. Leave off the false notion and perceive intuitively the Real. That alone matters. If you melt a gold ornament before testing it to be gold, what matters it how it is melted, whole or in parts, or of what shape the ornament was? All that you are interested in is if it is gold. The dead man sees not his body. It is the survivor that thinks about the manner in which the body is parted from. The realised have no death with or without the body, the realised man is equally aware and sees no difference. To him the one state is not superior to the other. To an outsider also the fortunes of a liberated one's body need not be of any concern; mind your business. Realise the Self; after realisation there will be time to think of what form of death is preferable to you.

It is the false identity of the Self with the body that causes the idea of preference, etc. Are you the body? Were you aware of it when you were fast asleep last night? No! What is it that exists now and troubles you? It is 'I'. Get rid of it and be happy.

Talk 33.

A visitor: "The Supreme Spirit (Brahman) is Real. The world (*jagat*) is illusion," is the stock phrase of Sri Sankaracharya. Yet others say, "The world is reality". Which is true?

M.: Both statements are true. They refer to different stages of development and are spoken from different points of view. The aspirant (*abhyasi*) starts with the definition, that which is real exists always; then he eliminates the world as unreal because it is changing. It cannot be real; 'not this, not this!' The seeker ultimately reaches the Self and there finds unity as the prevailing note. Then, that which was originally rejected as being unreal is found to be a part of the unity. Being absorbed in the Reality, the world also is Real. There is only being in Self-Realisation, and nothing but being. Again Reality is used in a different sense and is applied loosely by some thinkers to objects. They say that the reflected (*adhyasika*) Reality admits of degrees which are named:

(1) *Vyavaharika satya* (everyday life) - this chair is seen by me and is real.

(2) *Pratibhasika satya* (illusory) - Illusion of a serpent in a coiled rope. The appearance is real to the man who thinks so. This phenomenon appears at a point of time and under certain circumstances.

(3) *Paramartika satya* (ultimate) - Reality is that which remains the same always and without change.

If Reality be used in the wider sense the world may be said to have the everyday life and illusory degrees (*vyavaharika* and *pratibhasika satya*). Some, however, deny even the reality of practical life - *vyavaharika satya* and consider it to be only projection of the mind. According to them it is only *pratibhasika satya*, *i.e.*, an illusion.

YOGI RAMIAH'S ACCOUNT OF HIS EXPERIENCES

Talk 34.

Sitting in Maharshi's presence brings peace of mind. I used to sit in *samadhi* for three or four hours together. Then I felt my mind took a form and came out from within. By constant practice and meditation it entered the Heart and was merged into it. I conclude that the Heart is the resting place of mind. The result is peace. When the mind is absorbed in the Heart, the Self is realised. This could be felt even at the stage of concentration (*dharana*).

I asked Maharshi about contemplation. He taught me as follows:- When a man dies the funeral pyre is prepared and the body is laid flat on the pyre. The pyre is lit. The skin is burnt, then the flesh and then the bones until the whole body falls to ashes. What remains thereafter? The mind. The question arises, 'How many are there in this body - one or two?' If two, why do people say 'I' and not 'we'? There is therefore only one. Whence is it born? What is its nature (*swaroopa*)? Enquiring thus the mind also disappears. Then what remains over is seen to be 'I'. The next question is 'Who am I?' The Self alone. This is contemplation. It is how I did it. By this process attachment to the body (*dehavasana*) is destroyed. The ego vanishes. Self alone shines. One method of getting mind-dissolution (*manolaya*) is association with great ones - the yoga adepts (Yoga *arudhas*). They are perfect adepts in *samadhi*. Self-Realisation has been easy, natural, and perpetual to them. Those moving with them closely and in sympathetic contact gradually absorb the *samadhi* habit from them.

Talk 35.

An educated visitor asked Bhagavan about *dvaita* and *advaita*.

M.: Identification with the body is *dvaita*. Non-identification is *advaita*.

Talk 36.

An aristocratic and distinguished lady visitor from the North accompanied by her Private Secretary arrived at noon, waited a few minutes and asked Maharshi soon after he returned to the hall after lunch:

D.: Maharajji, can we see the dead?

M.: Yes.

D.: Can the yogis show them to us?

M.: Yes. They may. But do not ask me to show them to you. For I cannot.

D.: Do you see them?

M.: Yes, in dreams.

D.: Can we realise the goal through yoga?

M.: Yes.

D.: Have you written on yoga? Are there books on the subject by you?

M.: Yes.

After she left the Master observed: "Did we know our relatives before their birth that we should know them after their death?"

Talk 37.

"What is Karma?" asked someone.

M.: That which has already begun to bear fruit is classified as *prarabdha* Karma (past action). That which is in store and will later bear fruit is classified as *sanchita* Karma (accumulated action). This is multifarious like the grain obtained by villagers as barter for cress (greens). Such bartered grain consists of rice, ragi, barley, etc., some floating on, others sinking in water. Some of it may be good, bad or indifferent. When the most potent of the multifarious accumulated karma begins to bear fruit in the next birth it is called the *prarabdha* of that birth.

Talk 38.

When one of the present attendants came the first time to Bhagavan, he asked: "What is the way for liberation?" Maharshi replied: "The way already taken leads to liberation."

22nd September, 1936

Talk 39.

Conversing with R. Seshagiri Rao, a visitor, Maharshi remarked that a Self-Realised sage (*Atma jnani*) alone can be a good Karma yogi. "After the sense of doership has gone let us see what happens. Sri Sankara advised inaction. But did he not write commentaries and take part in disputation? Do not trouble about doing action or otherwise. Know Thyself. Then let us see whose action it is. Whose is it? Let action complete itself. So long as there is the doer he must reap the fruits of his action. If he does not think himself the doer there is no action for him. He is an ascetic who has renounced worldly life (*sanyasin*)."

D.: How did the ego arise?

M.: It is not necessary to know it. Know the present. Not knowing that, why do you worry about other times?

Maharshi said in reply to a question: "Is the world within you or without you? Does it exist apart from you? Does the world come and tell you 'I exist'?"

Talk 40.

The Brahmin questioner resumed: "How do we know that action is ours or not?"

M.: If the fruits of actions do not affect the person he is free from action.

D.: Is intellectual knowledge enough?

M.: Unless intellectually known, how to practice it? Learn it intellectually first, then do not stop with that. Practise it.

Maharshi then made certain remarks: "When you adhere to one philosophical system (*siddhanta*) you are obliged to condemn the others. That is the case with the heads of monasteries (*matadhipatis*)".

All people cannot be expected to do the same kind of action. Each one acts according to his temperament and past lives. Wisdom, Devotion, Action (*jnana, bhakti, karma*) are all interlocked. Meditation on forms is according to one's own mind. It is meant for ridding oneself of other forms and confining oneself to one form. It leads to the goal. It is impossible to fix the mind in the Heart to start with. So these aids are necessary. Krishna says that there is no birth (*janma*) to you, me, etc., and later says he was born before Aditya, etc. Arjuna disputes it. Therefore it is certain that each one thinks of God according to his own degree of advancement.

You say you are the body in wakeful state; not the body in sleep. Bodies being several-fold for an individual, should not there be infinite capacities for God? Whichever method one follows, that method is encouraged by the Sages. For it leads to the goal like any other method.

Talk 41.

D.: Are there heaven (*swarga*) and hell (*naraka*)?

M.: There must be someone to go there. They are like dreams. We see time and space exist in dream also. Which is true, dream or wakefulness?

D.: So we must rid ourselves of lust (*kama*), anger, (*krodha*), etc.

M.: Give up thoughts. You need not give up anything else. You must be there to see anything. It is the Self. Self is ever-conscious.

D.: Are pilgrimages, etc., good?

M.: Yes.

D.: What effort is necessary for reaching the Self?

M.: 'I' should be destroyed. Self is not to be reached. Is there any moment when Self is not? It is not new. Be as you are. What is new cannot be permanent. What is real must always exist.

D.: What is sacrifice through wisdom (*jnana yajna*) or other sacrifices?

M.: Other disciplines exist for it. Practice is for gaining wisdom (*jnana*).

D.: Are *jivanmuktas* (living liberated souls) of different kinds?

M.: What does it matter if they differ externally? There is no difference in their wisdom (*jnana*).

D.: When loyal to one Master can you respect others?

M.: Guru is only one. He is not physical. So long as there is weakness the support of strength is needed.

D.: J. Krishnamurti says, "No Guru is necessary?"

M.: How did he know it? One can say so after realising but not before.

D.: You have gained this state by great effort. What shall we poor souls do?

M.: We are in our Self. We are not in the world.

D.: Heaven and hell - what are they?

M.: You carry heaven and hell with you. Your lust, anger, etc., produce these regions. They are like dreams.

D.: The Gita says that if a man fixes his attention between the eyebrows and holds his breath he reaches the Supreme state. How is that done?

M.: You are always in the Self and there is no reaching it. The eyebrow is only a place where attention is to be fixed (seat of meditation - *upasanasthana*).

D.: You have spoken of the Heart as the seat of meditation?

M.: Yes, it is also that.

D.: What is Heart?

M.: It is the centre of the Self. The Self is the centre of centres. The Heart represents the psychic centre and not the physical centre.

D.: The term '*jnana*' is realised Wisdom. The same term is used for the method also. Why?

M.: '*Jnana*' includes the method also because it ultimately results in realisation.

D.: Is a man to engage in teaching his knowledge however imperfect?

M.: If his *prarabdha* be that way.

In the seventh chapter, Arjuna asks if Karma is a method (*sadhana*). Krishna answers that it is so if done without the sense of doership.

So also are Karmas approved by scriptures which deny Karma. The Karma disapproved by them is that which is done with the sense of doership. Do not leave Karma. You cannot do so. Give up the sense of doership. Karma will go on automatically. Or Karma will drop away from you. If Karma be your lot according to *prarabdha*, it will surely be done whether you will it or not; if Karma be not your lot, it will not be done even if you intently engage in it. Janaka, Suka, etc., were also in work without *ahankara*, Karma may be done for fame, or may be done unselfishly and for the public good. Yet even then they want applause. So it is really selfish.

D.: What is that one thing, knowing which all doubts are solved?

M.: Know the doubter. If the doubter be held, the doubts will not arise. *Here the doubter is transcendent*. Again when the doubter ceases to exist, there will be no doubts arising. From where will they arise? All are *jnanis, jivanmuktas*. Only they are not aware of the fact. Doubts must be uprooted. This means that the doubter must be uprooted. Here the doubter is the mind.

D.: What is the method?

M.: 'Who am I?' is the investigation.

D.: May we perform *japa*?

M.: Why should you think I am this? Investigate and the thoughts cease. What is, namely the Self, will be revealed as the inescapable residue.

D.: Is *hatha yoga* necessary?

M.: It is one of the aids - not that it is always necessary. It depends upon the person. *Vichara* surpasses *pranayama*. In *Yoga Vasishta* Chudala advises investigation (*vichara*) to Sikhidvaja for killing the ego.

Reality can be reached by holding on to *prana* or intellect. *Hatha yoga* is the former; *Vichara* is the latter.

D.: Is there any individuality for the *jnani* after Realization?

M.: How can he retain individuality?

Even ordinarily the elders advise *achamana* and *pranayama* before undertaking any work - be it worldly or other-worldly. That means, concentration of mind accomplishes the work.

D.: I meditate *neti-neti* (not this - not this).

M.: No - that is not meditation. Find the source. You must reach the source without fail. The false 'I' will disappear and the real 'I' will be realised. The former cannot exist apart from the latter.

24th September, 1936

Talk 42.

Mr. Duncan Greenlees, Madanapalli, wrote as follows:- One has at times had vivid flashes of a consciousness whose centre is outside the normal self and which seems to be inclusive. Without concerning the mind with philosophical concepts, how would Bhagavan advise us to work towards getting, retaining and extending those flashes? Does *abhyasa* in such experiences involve retirement?

Sri Bhagavan answered: 'Outside' - For whom is inside or outside? They can be only so long as there are the subject and object. For

whom are these two again? They both will resolve into the subject only. See who is in the subject. The investigation leads you to pure consciousness beyond the subject.

Normal self is the mind. This mind is with limitations. But pure consciousness is beyond limitations and reached by investigation as above outlined.

Getting - Self is always there. One seeks to destroy the obstacles to the revelation of the Self.

Retaining - Having once gained the Self it will be understood to be Here and Now. It is never lost.

Extending - There is no extending the Self, for it is always without contraction or expansion.

Retirement - Abiding in the Self is solitude. Because there is nothing alien to the Self. Retirement must be from some one place to another. There is neither the one nor the other apart from the Self. All being the Self, retirement is impossible and inconsistent.

Abhyasa is investigation into the Self.

28th March, 1935

Talk 43.

Mr. S. Ranganathan, I.C.S., Collector of Vellore, Mr. S. V. Ramamurthi, I.C.S. and Mr. T. Raghaviah, late Diwan of Pudukottah State, visited the Asramam. Mr. Ranganathan asked, "Kindly instruct me as to how the mind may be controlled."

M.: There are two methods. The one is to see what the mind is; then it subsides. The second is to fix your attention on something; then the mind remains quiet.

The questioner repeated the question for further elucidation. The same answer was returned with a little more added. The questioner did not look satisfied.

Mr. Raghaviah: Men of the world that we are, we have some kind of grief or another and do not know how to get over it. We pray to God and still are not satisfied. What can we do?

M.: Trust God.

D.: We surrender; but still there is no help.

M.: Yes. If you have surrendered, you must be able to abide by the will of God and not make a grievance of what may not please you. Things may turn out differently from what they look apparently. Distress often leads men to faith in God.

D.: But we are worldly. There is the wife, there are the children, friends and relatives. We cannot ignore their existence and resign ourselves to Divine Will, without retaining some little of the personality in us.

M.: That means you have not surrendered as professed by you. You must only trust God.

Mr. Ramamurthi: Swamiji, I have read Brunton's book *A Search in Secret India*, and was much impressed by the last chapter, where he says that it is possible to be conscious without thinking. I know that one can think, remaining forgetful of the physical body. Can one think without the mind? Is it possible to gain that consciousness which is beyond thoughts?

M.: Yes. There is only one consciousness, which subsists in the waking, dream and sleep states. In sleep there is no 'I'. The 'I-thought' arises on waking and then the world appears. Where was this 'I' in sleep? Was it there or was it not? It must have been there also, but not in the way that you feel now. The present is only the 'I-thought', whereas the sleeping 'I' is the real 'I'. It subsists all through. It is consciousness. If it is known you will see that it is beyond thoughts.

D.: Can we think without the mind?

M.: Thoughts may be like any other activities, not disturbing to the Supreme consciousness.

D.: Can one read others' minds?

The Master as usual told him to find his Self before worrying about others.

"Where are others apart from one's own Self?" asked the Master.

Mr. Raghaviah: How shall we correlate the higher experience with the lower experience (meaning spiritual experience with mundane affairs)?

M.: There is only one experience. What are the worldly experiences but those built up on the false 'I'? Ask the most successful man of

the world if he knows his Self. He will say "No". What can anyone know without knowing the Self? All worldly knowledge is built upon such a flimsy foundation.

Mr. Ramamurthi: How to know the 'Real I' as distinct from the 'false I'.

M.: Is there anyone who is not aware of himself? Each one knows, but yet does not know, the Self. A strange paradox.

The Master added later, "If the enquiry is made whether mind exists, it will be found that mind does not exist. That is control of mind. Otherwise, if the mind is taken to exist and one seeks to control it, it amounts to mind controlling the mind, just like a thief turning out to be a policeman to catch the thief, *i.e.*, himself. Mind persists in that way alone, but eludes itself."

3rd April, 1935

Talk 44.

Mr. Ekanath Rao, an Engineer, asked Sri Bhagavan if solitude is necessary for vichara.

M.: There is solitude everywhere. The individual is solitary always. His business is to find it out within, and not seek it without.

D.: The work-a-day world is distracting.

M.: Do not allow yourself to be distracted. Enquire for whom there is distraction. It will not afflict you after a little practice.

D.: Even the attempt is impossible.

M.: Make it and it will be found not so difficult.

D.: But the answer does not come for the search inward.

M.: The enquirer is the answer and no other answer can come. What comes afresh cannot be true. What always is, is true.

6th April, 1935

Talk 45.

A visitor asked: The path of realisation is difficult. Worldly matters are easy of understanding, whereas this is not.

M.: Yes. The mind always seeks external knowledge, leaving aside its own inner knowledge.

D.: A stay of one day with Sri Bhagavan is good; a stay of two days is better; of three days, more so, and so on. If it is a continuous stay here, how shall we get on with our mundane work?

M.: Stay here or elsewhere must be understood to be the same and to have the same effect.

12th April, 1935

Talk 46.

After hearing the Malayalam version of *Upadesa Sara* chanted, Mr. Ramachandra Iyer of Nagercoil asked in a characteristically unsophisticated way about the mind, concentration and control. The Master said that the mind is only identity of the Self with the body. It is a false ego that is created; it creates false phenomena in its turn, and appears to move in them; all these are false. The Self is the only Reality. If the false identity vanishes the persistence of the Reality becomes apparent. It does not mean that Reality is not here and now. It is always there and eternally the same. It is also in everyone's experience. For everyone knows that he is. "Who is he?" Subjectively, "Who am I?" The false ego is associated with objects; this ego itself is its own object. Objectivity is the falsity. Subject is alone the Reality. Do not confound yourself with the object, namely the body. This gives rise to the false ego, consequently of the world and your movements therein with the resulting misery. Do not think yourself to be this, that or anything; to be so and so, or to be such and such. Only leave off the falsity. The Reality will reveal itself. The scriptures say that the Self is *nityasiddha*, ever present, and yet speak of the removal of *ajnana*. If Self is (*nitya*) always and (*siddha*) present, how can there be *ajnana*? For whom is the *ajnana*? These are contradictory. But such statements are for guiding the earnest seeker in the right way. He does not readily understand the only Truth if mentioned in plain words as in *natwam naham neme janadhipah* (not thou, nor I, nor these kings ...). Sri Krishna declared the Truth, but Arjuna could not grasp it. Later Krishna plainly says that people confound Him with the body, whereas in reality He was not born nor will He die. Still Arjuna requires the whole Gita for the Truth to be made clear to him.

Look, the Self is only Be-ing, not being this or that. It is simple Being. Be - and there is an end of the ignorance. Enquire for whom is the ignorance. The ego arises when you wake up from sleep. In deep sleep you do not say that you are sleeping and that you are going to wake up or that you have been sleeping so long. But still you are there. Only when you are awake you say that you have slept. Your wakefulness comprises sleep also in it. Realise your pure Be-ing. Let there be no confusion with the body. The body is the result of thoughts. The thoughts will play as usual, but you will not be affected. You were not concerned with the body when asleep; so you can always remain.

Mr. Ekanatha Rao: How can anyone reconcile such activity with the wage-earning which is a necessity for worldly people?

M.: Actions form no bondage. Bondage is only the false notion. "I am the doer." Leave off such thoughts and let the body and senses play their role, unimpeded by your interference.

20th April, 1935

Talk 47.

A Malayalee visitor expressed his concern for the misery of the world and his opinion that 'Quest for Self' looked selfish in the midst of such suffering environments. His solution appeared to be selfless work.

M.: The sea is not aware of its wave. Similarly the Self is not aware of its ego.

Note: This makes clear what Sri Bhagavan means by quest for the source of ego.

Talk 48.

A visitor asked Sri Bhagavan, "You are Bhagavan. So you would know when I shall get *jnana*. Tell me when I shall be a *jnani*." Sri Bhagavan replied, "If I am Bhagavan there is no one besides the Self - therefore no *jnani* or *ajnani*. If otherwise I am as good as you are and know as much as yourself. Either way I cannot answer your question."

24th April, 1935

Talk 49.

Some men asked the Master questions which ultimately resolved themselves into one, that 'I' is not perceptible however much they might struggle.

The Master's reply was in the usual strain: "Who is it that says that 'I' is not perceptible? Is there an 'I' ignorant, and an 'I' elusive? Are there two 'I's in the same person? Ask yourself these questions. It is the mind which says that 'I' is not perceptible. Where is that mind from? Know the mind. You will find it a myth. King Janaka said, 'I have discovered the thief who had been ruining me so long. I will now deal with him summarily. Then I shall be happy.' Similarly it will be with others."

D.: How to know the 'I'?

M.: The 'I-I' is always there. There is no knowing it. It is not a new knowledge acquired. What is new and not here and now will be evanescent only. The 'I' is always there. There is obstruction to its knowledge and it is called ignorance. Remove the ignorance and knowledge shines forth. In fact this ignorance or even knowledge is not for Atman. They are only overgrowths to be cleared off. That is why Atman is said to be beyond knowledge and ignorance. It remains as it naturally is - that is all.

D.: There is no perceptible progress in spite of our attempts.

M.: Progress can be spoken of in things to be obtained afresh. Whereas here it is the removal of ignorance and not acquisition of knowledge. What kind of progress can be expected in the quest for the Self?

D.: How to remove the ignorance?

M.: While lying in bed in Tiruvannamalai you dream in your sleep that you find yourself in another town. The scene is real to you. Your body remains here on your bed in a room. Can a town enter your room, or could you have left this place and gone elsewhere, leaving the body here? Both are impossible. Therefore your being here and seeing another town are both unreal. They appear real to the mind. The 'I' of the dream soon vanishes, then another 'I' speaks of the dream. This 'I' was not in the dream. Both the 'I's are unreal. There

is the substratum of the mind which continues all along, giving rise to so many scenes. An 'I' rises forth with every thought and with its disappearance that 'I' disappears too. Many 'I's are born and die every moment. The subsisting mind is the real trouble. That is the thief according to Janaka. Find him out and you will be happy.

Talk 50.

Sri Bhagavan read out, from the *Prabuddha Bharata*, Kabir's saying that all know that the drop merges into the ocean but few know that the ocean merges into the drop. This is *para bhakti*, said he.

5th June, 1935

Talk 51.

A young Brahmin (25 years of age) came on a visit to the Master. At his sight he became hysterical and shouted *Sivoham, Aham Brahma Asmi*, "You are God", "You are *Para Brahmam*". "You are my father", "Father, save me" and so on. His hysterics waxing, he beat his chest violently alternately with both his hands, shouting *Sivoham, Sivoham*. Then again he shouted hysterically gnashing his teeth, "I will stamp out materialism", as if he was crushing materialism between his teeth. Then he asked. "Either give me power, either give me power - or - or - or - I will..." He began as if to throttle himself.

When gently removed by others he fell prostrate before Sri Bhagavan, saying, "I will take refuge at the feet of my Father. Father! You are Parthasarathi, I am Arjuna. We will stamp out materialism," and so on. He was finally taken away from the presence of Maharshi. He washed himself, took some light refreshment and quietly seated himself in the hall for some hours. He abstained from the midday meal. In the afternoon he had another fit when he shouted, "I will chop off the head of Krishna, if he should come here now. He advised me to give up my job, but does not protect my mother. Or let him chop off my head," and so on.

After some hours of quiet, Sri Bhagavan asked Mr. K. L. Sarma to read out a portion of his commentary on *Anubandha* (Appendix to 40 verses). The gist of it is that people, unable to help themselves, ask for divine powers to be utilised for human welfare. This is similar to the story of a

lame man who blustered, saying that he would overpower the enemy if only he were helped on to his legs. The intention is good but there is no sense of proportion. The young man on hearing it suddenly sprang to his feet, saluting Sri Bhagavan and saying "Father! Father! I was mistaken. Pardon me. Teach me. I shall abide by what you say," and so on. Then again in the evening he prostrated himself, saying, "I surrender."

9th June, 1935

Talk 52.

A man from Cocanada asked: "My mind remains clear for two or three days and turns dull for the next two or three days; and so it alternates. What is it due to?"

M.: It is quite natural; it is the play of brightness (*satva*), activity (*rajas*) and darkness (*tamas*) alternating. Do not regret the *tamas*; but when *satva* comes into play, hold on to it fast and make the best of it.

D.: What is the Heart?

M.: It is the seat (if such could be said of it) of the Self.

D.: Is it the physical heart?

M.: No. It is the seat wherefrom 'I-I' arises.

D.: What becomes of the *jiva* after death?

M.: The question is not appropriate for a *jiva* now living. A disembodied *jiva* may ask me, if convenient. In the meantime let the embodied *jiva* solve its present problem and find who he is. There will be an end of such doubts.

D.: What is *dhyana*?

M.: The word *dhyana* usually signifies meditation on some object, whereas *nididhyasana* is used for enquiry into the Self. The triads persist until the Self is realised. *Dhyana* and *nididhyasana* are the same so far as the aspirant is concerned, because they involve trinity and are synonymous with *bhakti*.

D.: How should *dhyana* be practised?

M.: Dhyana serves to concentrate the mind. The predominant idea keeps off all others. *Dhyana* varies according to the individual. It may be on an aspect of God, on a *mantra*, or on the Self, etc.

15th June, 1935

Talk 53.

A young man, Mr. Knowles, came for *darsan*. He had read Paul Brunton's two books. He asked: "The Buddhists say that 'I' is unreal, whereas Paul Brunton in the *Secret Path* tells us to get over the 'I-thought' and reach the state of 'I'. Which is true?"

M.: There are supposed to be two 'I's; the one is lower and unreal, of which all are aware; and the other, the higher and the real, which is to be realised.

You are not aware of yourself while asleep, you are aware in wakefulness; waking, you say that you were asleep; you did not know it in the deep sleep state. So then, the idea of diversity has arisen along with the body-consciousness; this body-consciousness arose at some particular moment; it has origin and end. What originates must be something. What is that something? It is the 'I'-consciousness. Who am I? Whence am I? On finding the source, you realise the state of Absolute Consciousness.

D.: Who is this 'I'? It seems to be only a continuum of sense-impression. The Buddhist idea seems to be so too.

M.: The world is not external. The impressions cannot have an outer origin. Because the world can be cognised only by consciousness. The world does not say that it exists. It is your impression. Even so this impression is not consistent and not unbroken. In deep sleep the world is not cognised; and so it exists not for a sleeping man. Therefore the world is the sequence of the ego. Find out the ego. The finding of its source is the final goal.

D.: I believe that we should not inflict suffering on other lives. Should we then endure the mosquito bite and submit to it also?

M.: You do not like to suffer yourself. How can you inflict suffering on others? Just keep off mosquitoes since you suffer by their stings.

D.: Is it right that we kill other lives, *e.g.*, mosquitoes, bugs?

M.: Everyone is a suicide. The eternal, blissful, and natural state has been smothered by this life of ignorance. In this way the present life is due to the killing of the eternal, pristine Being. Is it not a case of suicide? So then, everyone is a suicide. Why worry about murders and killing?

In the course of a later talk the visitor said: "The world sends impressions and I awake!"

M.: Can the world exist without someone to perceive it? Which is prior? The Being-consciousness or the rising-consciousness? The Being-consciousness is always there, eternal and pure. The rising-consciousness rises forth and disappears. It is transient.

D.: Does not the world exist for others even when I am asleep?

M.: Such a world mocks at you also for knowing it without knowing yourself. The world is the result of your mind. Know your mind. Then see the world. You will realise that it is not different from the Self.

D.: Is not Maharshi aware of himself and his surroundings, as clearly as I am?

M.: To whom is the doubt? The doubts are not for the realised. They are only for the ignorant.

16th June, 1935

Talk 54.

An Andhra Pandit - an elderly gentleman - had some doubts regarding Kavyakantha's exposition of Advaita. He has found it in books that Brahman is free from *sajatiya, vijatiya* and *swagata bheda*. Such conditions are satisfied in *vivarta vada* but not in *parinama vada*. In the latter, *swagata bheda* is bound to be. The Master pointed out that Dakshinamurti did not teach anything of the kind. He did not say that Brahman is related to *Sakti* or not related. All that was, was only silence; and the doubts of the *sishyas* (disciples) were cleared. The significance is that there is nothing to be learnt, discussed and concluded. Everyone knows 'I am.' There is the confusion that the 'I' is the body. Because the 'I' arises from the Absolute and gives rise to *buddhi* (Intellect). In *buddhi* the 'I' looks the size and shape of the body, *na medhaya* means that Brahman cannot be apprehended by *buddhi*.

Brahman → *aham* ('I-I') → *buddhi* (intellect).

How can such *buddhi* crossing over *aham* discover Brahman? It is impossible. Just get over the false conception of the 'I' being the

body. Discover to whom the thoughts arise. If the present 'I'-ness vanishes, the discovery is complete. What remains over is the pure Self. Compare deep sleep and wakefulness. Diversity and body are found only in the latter. In the former the Self remains without the perception of body or of the world. Happiness reigns there.

The *Sruti vakya, 'Aham Brahmasmi'*, relates to the state and not the mode of mind. One cannot become Brahman by continuing to repeat the *mantra*. It means that Brahman is not elsewhere. It is your Self. Find that Self; Brahman is found. Do not attempt to reach Brahman as if it were in some far off place.

The Pandit remarked that thoughts are so persistent that the *aham* cannot be reached.

The Master said: The *Brahma akara vritti* helps to turn the mind away from other thoughts. Either some such practice is necessary or association with sadhus should be made. The sadhu has already overcome the mind and remains in Peace. His proximity helps to bring about such condition in others. Otherwise there is no meaning in seeking a sadhu's company.

Deho aham (I am the body) is limitation and is the root of all mean and selfish actions and desires.

Brahma aham (I am Brahman) is passing beyond limitation and signifies sympathy, charity, love etc., which are divine and virtuous.

D.: How does a *grihasta* (householder) fare in the scheme of *moksha* (liberation)?

M.: Why do you think you are a *grihasta*? If you go out as a *sanyasi*, a similar thought (that you are a *sanyasi*) will haunt you. Whether you continue in the household, or renounce it and go to the forest, your mind haunts you. The ego is the source of thoughts. It creates the body and the world and makes you think you are a *grihasta*. If you renounce the world, it will only substitute the thought *sanyasi* for *grihasta* and the environments of the forest for those of the household. But the mental obstacles are always there. They even increase in new surroundings. There is no help in the change of environment. The obstacle is the mind. It must be got over whether at home or in the forest. If you can do it in the forest, why not in

the home? Therefore why change the environment? Your efforts can be made even now, in whatever environment you may be.

The environment never abandons you, according to your desire. Look at me. I left home. Look at yourselves. You have come here leaving the home environment. What do you find here? Is this different from what you left? Even if one is immersed in *nirvikalpa samadhi* for years together, when he emerges from it he will find himself in the environment which he is bound to have. That is the reason for the Acharya emphasising *sahaja samadhi* in preference to *nirvikalpa samadhi* in his excellent work *Viveka Chudamani*.

One should be in spontaneous *samadhi* - that is, in one's pristine state - in the midst of every environment.

Later on Sri Bhagavan said: "Control of breath may be internal or external."

The *antah pranayama* (the internal breath-regulation) is as follows:-

Naham chinta (I-am-not-the-body idea) is *rechaka* (exhalation).

Koham (who am I?) is *puraka* (inhalation).

Soham (I am He) is *kumbhaka* (retention of breath).

Doing thus, the breath becomes automatically controlled.

Bahih pranayama (external control) is for one not endowed with strength to control the mind. There is no way so sure as that; or a *sadhu's* company. The external practice must be resorted to by a wise man if he does not enjoy a *sadhu's* company. If in a *sadhu's* company the *sadhu* provides the needed strength, though unseen by others, *Pranayama* need not be exactly as described in *hatha* Yoga. If engaged in *japa, dhyana, bhakti*, etc., just a little control of breath will suffice to control the mind. The mind is the rider and the breath the horse. *Pranayama* is a check on the horse. By that check the rider is checked.

Pranayama may be done just a little. To watch the breath is one way of doing it. The mind abstracted from other activities is engaged in watching the breath. That controls the breath; and in its turn the mind is controlled.

If unable to do so, *rechaka* and *puraka* need not be practised. Breath may be retained a short while in *japa*, *dhyana*, etc. Then, too, good results will follow.

18th June, 1935

Talk 55.

D.: Can *advaita* be realised by *japa* of holy names; say Rama, Krishna, etc.?

M.: Yes.

D.: Is it not a means of an inferior order?

M.: Have you been told to make *japa* or to discuss its order in the scheme of things?

Silence.

22nd June, 1935

Talk 56.

A youth of twenty asked how to realise the Self. He sat down in silence and waited more than an hour and then was about to leave. While doing so, he asked:

D.: How to realise Self?

M.: Whose Self? Find out.

D.: Who am I?

M.: Find it yourself.

D.: I do not know.

M.: Think. Who is it that says "I do not know"? What is not known? In that statement, who is the 'I'?

D.: Somebody in me.

M.: Who is the somebody? In whom?

D.: Maybe some power.

M.: Find it.

D.: How to realise Brahman?

M.: Without knowing the Self why do you seek to know Brahman?

D.: The *sastras* say Brahman pervades all and me too.

M.: Find the 'I' in me and then there will be time to think of Brahman.

D.: Why was I born?

M.: Who was born? The answer is the same for all of your questions.

D.: Who am I then?

M.: (Smiling) Have you come to examine me and ask me? You must say who you are.

D.: In deep sleep the soul leaves the body and remains elsewhere. When it re-enters I awake. Is it so?

M.: What is it that leaves the body?

D.: The power, perhaps.

M.: Find out the power.

D.: The body is composed of five elements. What are the elements?

M.: Without knowing the Self how do you aim at knowing the elements?

The young man sat awhile and left with permission. The Master remarked later: "All right. It will work."

23rd June, 1935

Talk 57.

Sri Bhagavan said that *sushumna* is the name mostly mentioned in scriptures. Other names also occur; *e.g., para, atma, amrita*. It is also stated that *sushumna* becomes *leena* (merged in *para*). So it may be said that *para* is the terminology of *jnana*, whereas *sushumna* is that of *Yoga*.

24th June, 1935

A DOUBT IN 'SRI RAMANA GITA' ANSWERED

Chapter XIV, Stanza 10 reads: "With yet further progress, invisibility also may result. Such an one, being pure consciousness only, flourishes as a *siddha*."

Chapter XVIII, Last Stanza reads: "The glory of the *siddhis* is past imagination, they are equal to Siva, yea Siva himself, in being able to grant boons."

The meaning is that, with Self-Realization, real and incessant *tapas* results. With the maturing of such *tapas* some *jnanis* can make their bodies intangible and invisible. They are known as *siddhas*.

Later, "the greatness of the *siddhas* is incomprehensible. They are equal to Siva and can even grant boons." So said Sri Bhagavan.

There is an Upanishad *mantra, atmajnam hyarchayet bhutikamah* (one desirous of liberation or wealth must serve a Self-realised Sage). Here is no mention of *siddha* for granting boons. The *jnani* can do so. The *mantras* again, *swe mahimni pratishtitah* (abiding in his own grandeur), *anantam Brahma* (Brahman is infinite), will seem confounding when read with the slokas cited above. *Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma* (All this is Brahman); *Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavati* (the knower of Brahman becomes Brahman Itself), show that a *jnani* is *sarvajna* (all-knower). What then is the distinction between the *jnani* and the *siddha,* and the ability of the latter to grant boons, implying the absence of it in the former?

This was the doubt. The master explained: "The Gita questions were asked in a certain spirit. The answers were according to it. People look to the body only and they want *siddhis* also. With Self-Realisation no powers can extend even into it, and how can they extend beyond? People anxious for *siddhis* are not content with their idea of *jnana* and so want *siddhis* associated with it. They are likely to neglect the supreme happiness of *jnana* and aspire for *siddhis*. For this they are going through the by-lanes instead of the royal path and so will likely lose their way. In order to guide them aright and keep them on the royal road alone the *siddhis* are said to accompany *jnana*. In fact *jnana* comprises all, and a *jnani* will not waste even a thought on them. Let the people get *jnana* and then seek *siddhis* if they so desire.

I have said: *sarira samsrayah siddhayah* (the *siddhis* relate to the body), because their outlook is concerning the body. A *jnani* and *siddha* are not different. In *varan datum* (to bestow boons) the boons include *atmalabha* (the gain of Self) also. The *siddhis* are not merely of an inferior order but of the highest order.

The *sastras* are meant to suit varying conditions. Their spirit remains the same. In *Halasya Mahima* there is a chapter on the eightfold

siddhis. There Siva says that His *bhakta* never wastes a thought on them. Again Siva says that He never grants boons. The desires of the devotees are fulfilled according to their *prarabdha* only. When *Iswara* Himself says so, what of others? In order to display *siddhis* there must be others to recognise them. That means there is no *jnana* in the one who displays them. Therefore *siddhis* are not worthy of any thought. *Jnana* alone is to be aimed at and gained.

Sri Ramana Gita Chapter XVII, Verse 4, Translation in Tamil is inaccurate.

Sri Bhagavan pointed out the inaccuracy and corrected it. Vaidharbha's question was: "In practice, the thoughts are found to manifest and subside alternately. Is this *jnana*?" Sri Bhagavan explained the doubt as follows:

Some people think that there are different stages in *jnana*. The Self is *nitya aparoksha, i.e*., ever-realised, knowingly or unknowingly. *Sravana*, they argue, should therefore be *aparoksha jnana* (directly experienced) and not *paroksha jnana* (indirect knowledge). But *jnana* should result in *duhkha nivriti* (loss of misery) whereas *sravana* alone does not bring it about. Therefore they say, though *aparoksha*, it is not unshaken; the rising of *vasanas* is the cause of its being weak (not unchanging); when the *vasanas* are removed, *jnana* becomes unshaken and bears fruit.

Others say *sravana* is only *paroksha jnana*. By *manana* (reflection) it becomes *aparoksha* spasmodically. The obstruction to its continuity is the *vasanas:* they rise up with reinforced vigour after *manana*. They must be held in check. Such vigilance consists in remembering = "I am not the body" and adhering to the *aparoksha anubhava* (direct experience) which has been had in course of *manana* (reflection). Such practice is called *nididhyasana* and eradicates the *vasanas*. Then dawns the *sahaja* state. That is *jnana*, sure.

The *aparoksha* in *manana* cannot effect *dukha nivritti* (loss of misery) and cannot amount to *moksha*, *i.e*., release from bondage because the *vasanas* periodically overpower the *jnana*. Hence it is *adridha* (weak) and becomes firm after the *vasanas* have been eradicated by *nididhyasana* (one-pointedness).

SRI RAMANA GITA AGAIN

Mr. T. K. S. Iyer, a devotee, was speaking of the *chakras* Sri Bhagavan said: Atman (the Self) alone is to be realised. Its realisation holds all else in its compass. *Sakti*, Ganapati; *siddhis*, etc., are included in it. Those who speak of these have not realised the Atman. Atman is in the heart and *is* the Heart itself. The manifestation is in the brain. The passage from the heart to the brain might be considered to be through *sushumna* or a nerve with any other name. The Upanishads say *pare leena* - meaning that *sushumna* or such *nadis* are all comprised in *para*, *i.e*., the *atma nadi*. The yogis say that the current rising up to *sahasrara* (brain) ends there. That experience is not complete. For *jnana*, they must come to the Heart. *Hridaya* (Heart) is the alpha and omega.

4th July, 1935

SRIMAD BHAGAVAD GITA

Talk 58.

Mr. Ranganathan, I. C. S: In *Srimad Bhagavad Gita* there is a passage: One's own *dharma* is the best; an alien *dharma* is full of risks. What is the significance of one's own *dharma*?

M.: It is usually interpreted to mean the duties of the orders and of the different castes. The physical environment must also be taken into consideration.

D.: If *varnasrama dharma* be meant, such *dharma* prevails only in India. On the other hand the *Gita* should be universally applicable.

M.: There is *varnasrama* in some form or other in every land. The significance is that one should hold on to the single Atman and not swerve therefrom. That is the whole gist of it.

sva = one's own, *i.e*., of the Self, of the Atman.

para = the other's, *i.e*., of the non-self, of the *anatma*.

Atma Dharma is inherence in the Self. There will be no distraction and no fear. Troubles arise only when there is a second to oneself. If the Atman be realised to be only unitary, there is no second and therefore no cause for fear. The man, as he is now, confounds the

anatma (non-Self) *dharma* with *atma* (the Self) *dharma* and suffers. Let him know the Self and abide in it; there is an end of fear, and there are no doubts.

Even if interpreted as *varnasrama dharma* the significance is only this much. Such *dharma* bears fruit only when done selflessly. That is, one must realise that he is not the doer, but that he is only a tool of some Higher Power. Let the Higher Power do what is inevitable and let me act only according to its dictates. The actions are not mine. Therefore the result of the actions cannot be mine. If one thinks and acts so, where is the trouble? Be it *varnasrama dharma* or *loukika dharma* (worldly activities), it is immaterial. Finally, it amounts to this:

sva = atmanah (of the Self)

para = anaatmanah (of the non-self)

Such doubts are natural. The orthodox interpretation cannot be reconciled with the life of a modern man obliged to work for his livelihood in different capacities.

A man from Pondy interposed: *Sarva dharmaan parityajya maamekam saranam vraja* (leaving all duties surrender to me only).

Sri Bhagavan: (All) *Sarva* is only *anaatmanah* (of the non-self); the emphasis is on *ekam* (only). To the man who has strong hold of the *eka* (one) where are the *dharmas*? It means, "Be sunk in the Self."

D.: The Gita was taught for action.

M.: What does the Gita say? Arjuna refused to fight.

Krishna said, "So long as you refuse to fight, you have the sense of doership. Who are you to refrain or to act? Give up the notion of doership. Until that sense disappears you are bound to act. You are being manipulated by a Higher Power. You are admitting it by your own refusal to submit to it. Instead recognise the Power and submit as a tool. (Or to put it differently), if you refuse you will be forcibly drawn into it. Instead of being an unwilling worker, be a willing one.

"Rather, be fixed in the Self and act according to nature without the thought of doership. Then the results of action will not affect you. That is manliness and heroism."

Thus, 'inherence in the Self' is the sum and substance of *Gita* teaching. Finally, the Master Himself added, "If a man be established in the Self these doubts would not arise. They arise only until he is established there."

D.: Then of what use is such reply to the enquirer?

M.: The words still have force and will surely operate in due course.

Talk 59.

A moulvi asked: How does sleep overtake one?

M.: If the enquirer knows who is awake in the wakeful condition he will also know how sleep comes on. The enquiry arises only to the waking man and not to the sleeper. It must be easier to know the waking Self than the sleeping Self.

D.: I know how I awoke. But I do not know how sleep comes on. I am aware of my wakeful state. For instance if anyone takes away my stick I prevent his doing so, whereas I cannot do so in sleep or in dream. The proof of wakefulness is evident. But what is the proof of sleep?

M.: Your ignorance is the evidence of sleep: your awareness is that of wakefulness.

D.: My wakefulness is known by the opening of my eye. But how does sleep overtake me?

M.: In the same way as sleep overtakes you, wakefulness also overtakes you.

D.: But I do not perceive how sleep comes on in the same way as I know my wakefulness.

M.: Never mind.

D.: Please describe what is sleep, without illustrations. Sleep by itself should be known. I want a real picture of sleep.

M.: Such picture is sleep itself.

D.: Is it better to reach salvation, being married, or being a hermit?

M.: Whatever you think better.

D.: Visvamitra had no fall when in the married state, whereas he had a fall in his hermit life. Does it not apply to others also?

M.: Visvamitra was as pure in the hermit life as when he was married. There was no difference. He was as contaminated when married as when he was a hermit.

D.: Was he a *rishi*?

M.: When contaminated he was not a *rishi*.

D.: Can he become a *rishi* even afterwards?

M.: Yes. By proper *bhakti* he could become a good *rishi*. Repentance and prayer will set him right.

D.: With all your penance for so many years what have you got?

M.: I have got what need be got. I see what need be seen.

D.: Can all see the same?

M.: I see only just what all do. It is immanent in all.

D.: Is this the way for seeing It?

M.: Method may be anything. From whatever directions the pilgrims may foregather, they must enter the Kaaba only by one route (passage) or all gather only to enter the Kaaba.

D.: Please tell me two *upadesas* on the way to salvation as known by you.

M.: What *upadesa* do I know? Everything is *upadesa*. Worship of God is the only *upadesa*.

5th July, 1935

ON MOUNA (SILENCE)

Talk 60.

Sri Bhagavan: The silence of solitude is forced. Restrained speech in society amounts to silence. For the man then controls his speech. The speaker must come forth before he speaks. If engaged otherwise speech is restrained. Introverted mind is otherwise active and is not anxious to speak.

Mouna as a disciplinary measure is meant for limiting the mental activities due to speech. If the mind is otherwise controlled disciplinary *mouna* is unnecessary. For *mouna* becomes natural.

Vidyaranya has said that twelve years' forced *mouna* brings about

absolute *mouna* - that is, makes one unable to speak. It is more like a mute animal than otherwise. That is not *mouna*.

Mouna is constant speech. Inactivity is constant activity.

6th July, 1935

Talk 61.

Mr. Ekanatha Rao: How is *dhyana* practised - with eyes open or closed?

M.: It may be done either way. The point is that the mind must be introverted and kept active in its pursuit. Sometimes it happens that when the eyes are closed the latent thoughts rush forth with great vigour. It may also be difficult to introvert the mind with the eyes open. It requires strength of mind to do so. The mind is contaminated when it takes in objects. Otherwise, it is pure. The main factor in *dhyana* is to keep the mind active in its own pursuit without taking in external impressions or thinking of other matters.

Talk 62.

Mr. Ekanatha Rao: What is *sphurana* (a kind of indescribable but palpable sensation in the heart centre)?

M.: Sphurana is felt on several occasions, such as in fear, excitement, etc. Although it is always and all over, yet it is felt at a particular centre and on particular occasions. It is also associated with antecedent causes and confounded with the body. Whereas, it is all alone and pure; it is the Self. If the mind be fixed on the *sphurana* and one senses it continuously and automatically it is realisation.

Again *sphurana* is the foretaste of Realisation. It is pure. The subject and object proceed from it. If the man mistakes himself for the subject, objects must necessarily appear different from him. They are periodically withdrawn and projected, creating the world and the subject's enjoyment of the same. If, on the other hand, the man feels himself to be the screen on which the subject and object are projected there can be no confusion, and he can remain watching their appearance and disappearance without any perturbation to the Self.

Talk 63.

A high officer asked: If juniors are promoted over oneself the mind is perturbed. Will the enquiry, 'Who am I?' help the man to soothe the mind under such circumstances?

M.: Yes. Quite so. The enquiry 'Who am I?' turns the mind inward and makes it calm.

D.: I have faith in *murti dhyana* (worship of form). Will it not help me to gain *jnana*?

M.: Surely it will. *Upasana* helps concentration of mind. Then the mind is free from other thoughts and is full of the meditated form. The mind becomes it - and thus quite pure. Then think who is the worshipper. The answer is 'I', *i.e*., the Self. So the Self is gained ultimately.

The present difficulty is that the man thinks that he is the doer. But it is a mistake. It is the Higher Power which does everything and the man is only a tool. If he accepts that position he is free from troubles; otherwise he courts them. Take for instance, the figure in a *gopuram* (temple tower), where it is made to appear to bear the burden of the tower on its shoulders. Its posture and look are a picture of great strain while bearing the very heavy burden of the tower. But think. The tower is built on the earth and it rests on its foundations. The figure (like Atlas bearing the earth) is a part of the tower, but is made to look as if it bore the tower. Is it not funny? So is the man who takes on himself the sense of doing.

Then the Malayalam version of *Ulladu Narpadu* was read out by a devotee for the benefit of the visitor.

After hearing it, he asked: What about the reference to duality in practice and unity at the end?

M.: Some people think that one must begin practice with dualistic idea. It refers to them. They say that there is God; the man must worship and meditate; ultimately the *jiva* merges into God. Others say that the Supreme Being and the *jiva* are always apart and never merge into each other. Howsoever it may be at the end, let us not trouble ourselves about it now. All are agreed that the *jiva* IS. Let the man find out the *jiva*, *i.e*., his Self. Then there will be time to

find out if the Self should merge in the Supreme, is a part thereof, or remains different from it. Let us not forestall the conclusion. Keep an open mind, dive within and find out the Self. The truth will itself dawn upon you. Why should you determine beforehand if the finality is unity absolute or qualified, or duality? There is no meaning in it. The ascertainment is now made by logic and by intellect. The intellect derives light from the Self (the Higher Power). How can the reflected and partial light of the intellect envisage the whole and the original Light? The intellect cannot reach the Self and how can it ascertain its nature?

Such is the significance of the reference.

D.: One of the stanzas says that the scriptures so scrupulously studied in the earlier stages are ultimately of no use. At what stage do they become useless?

M.: When their essence is realised. The scriptures are useful to indicate the existence of the Higher Power (the Self) and the way to gain it. Their essence is that much only. When that is assimilated the rest is useless. But they are voluminous, adapted to the development of the seeker. As one rising up in the scale finds the regions one has passed to be only steps to the higher stage, and so on, the steps ascended become *purvapaksha* successively until the goal is gained. When the goal is reached it remains alone, and all the rest becomes useless. That is how the *sastras* become useless. We read so much. Do we remember all that we read? But have we forgotten the essentials? The essential soaks in the mind and the rest is forgotten. So it is with the *sastras*.

The fact is that the man considers himself limited and there arises the trouble. The idea is wrong. He can see it for himself. In sleep there was no world, no ego (no limited self), and no trouble. Something wakes up from that happy state and says 'I'. To that ego the world appears. Being a speck in the world he wants more and gets into trouble.

How happy he was before the rising of the ego! Only the rise of the ego is the cause of the present trouble. Let him trace the ego to its source and he will reach that undifferentiated happy state which is sleepless sleep. The Self remains ever the same, here and now. There is nothing more to be gained. Because the limitations have wrongly

been assumed there is the need to transcend them. It is like the ten ignorant fools who forded a stream and on reaching the other shore counted themselves to be nine only. They grew anxious and grieved over the loss of the unknown tenth man. A wayfarer, on ascertaining the cause of their grief, counted them all and found them to be ten. But each one of them had counted the others leaving himself out. The wayfarer gave each in succession a blow telling them to count the blows. They counted ten and were satisfied. The moral is that the tenth man was not got anew. He was all along there, but ignorance caused grief to all of them.

Again, a woman wore a necklace round her neck but forgot it. She began to search for it and made enquiries. A friend of hers, finding out what she was looking for, pointed out the necklace round the seeker's neck. She felt it with her hands and was happy. Did she get the necklace anew? Here again ignorance caused grief and knowledge happiness.

Similarly also with the man and the Self. There is nothing to be gained anew. Ignorance of the Self is the cause of the present misery; knowledge of the Self brings about happiness.

Moreover, if anything is to be got anew it implies its previous absence. What remained once absent might vanish again. So there would be no permanency in salvation. Salvation is permanent because the Self is here and now and eternal.

Thus the man's efforts are directed towards the removal of ignorance. Wisdom seems to dawn, though it is natural and ever present.

The visitor, while taking leave, saluted the master, and said, "It is said that the victim in the tiger's mouth is gone for ever."

The reference is to a passage in Who am I? where it is stated that a disciple can never revert to the world after he has once fallen into the field of the Guru's gracious look as surely as the prey in the tiger's jaws cannot escape.

Talk 64.

News of someone's death was brought to Sri Bhagavan. He said, "Good. The dead are indeed happy. They have got rid of the troublesome overgrowth - the body. The dead man does not grieve.

The survivors grieve for the man who is dead. Do men fear sleep? On the contrary sleep is courted and on waking up every man says that he slept happily. One prepares the bed for sound sleep. Sleep is temporary death. Death is longer sleep. If the man dies while yet alive he need not grieve over others' death. One's existence is evident with or without the body, as in waking, dream and sleep. Then why should one desire continuance of the bodily shackles? Let the man find out his undying Self and die and be immortal and happy."

13th July, 1935

Talk 65.

A visitor: Is the *jagat* (world) perceived even after Self-Realization?

M.: From whom is this question? Is it from a *jnani* or from an *ajnani*?

D.: From an *ajnani*.

M.: Realise to whom the question arises. It can be answered if it arises after knowing the doubter. Can the *jagat* or the body say that it is? Or does the seer say that the *jagat* or the body is? The seer must be there to see the objects. Find out the seer first. Why worry yourself now with what will be in the hereafter?

Sri Bhagavan continued: What does it matter if the *jagat* is perceived or not perceived? Have you lost anything by your perception of *jagat* now? Or do you gain anything where there is no such perception in your deep sleep? It is immaterial whether the world is perceived or not perceived.

The *ajnani* sees the *jnani* active and is confounded. The *jagat* is perceived by both; but their outlooks differ. Take the instance of the cinema. There are pictures moving on the screen. Go and hold them. What do you hold? It is only the screen. Let the pictures disappear. What remains over? The screen again. So also here. Even when the world appears, see to whom it appears. Hold the substratum of the 'I'. After the substratum is held what does it matter if the world appears or disappears?

The *ajnani* takes the world to be real; whereas the *jnani* sees it only as the manifestation of the Self. It is immaterial if the Self manifests itself or ceases to do so.

15th July, 1935

Talk 66.

A letter was received containing some learned questions pertaining to memory, sleep and death. It looked, at first sight, that they were cogent yet baffling to answer. But when the Master was approached on the subject he disentangled the skein very nicely, pointing out that all such confusion was due to the non-differentiation of the real 'I' from the false 'I'. The attributes and modes pertain to the latter and not to the former. One's efforts are directed only to remove one's ignorance. Afterwards they cease, and the real Self is found to be always there. No effort is needed to remain as the Self.

21st July, 1935

Talk 67.

A visitor, Mr. K. S. N. Iyer of the South Indian Railway, said, "There is a trifling halting-place in my meditation. When I ask myself, 'Who am I?' my reasoning proceeds as follows; I see my hand. Who sees it? My eye. How to see the eye? In a mirror. Similarly to see me, there must be a mirror. 'Which is to supply the place of the mirror in me?' is my question."

M.: Then why do you enquire, "Who am I?" Why do you say you are troubled and so on? You could as well remain quiet. Why do you rise out of your composure?

D.: Enquiring thus helps me to concentrate. Is concentration the only benefit?

M.: What more do you want? Concentration is the thing. What makes you come out of your quiet?

D.: Because I am drawn out.

M.: Enquiry of "Who am I?" means finding the source of 'I'. When that is found, that which you seek is accomplished.

(The gist of Sri Bhagavan's words seems to be that one should make a concerted effort and not give it up baffled, with a defeatist mentality.)

Talk 68.

Dr. Radhakamal Mukerjee, a well-known Professor, fair man of middle age, with a peaceful look, practising yoga or meditation, has had some occult experiences and desires the mystery to be unravelled by the Master. He has written a book and had it published by Messrs. Longmans Green & Co., London. He finds Self-Realisation hard to attain and requires the Master's help. His question: "The *upanishadic* method of meditation has now disappeared. There was a great sage in Bengal who instructed me in it. After long years of discipline and practice I am having some mystic experiences. I feel sometimes that *Bhuma* (Supreme Consciousness) is infinitude and that I am finite consciousness. Is that correct?"

M.: Bhuma (Perfection) alone is. It is Infinite. There arises from it this finite consciousness taking on an *upadhi* (limiting adjunct). This is *abhasa* or reflection. Merge this individual consciousness into the Supreme One. That is what should be done.

D.: Bhuma is an attribute of Supreme Consciousness.

M.: Bhuma is the Supreme - *yatra naanyat pasyati yatra naanyat srunoti sa bhuma* (where one does not see any other, hears nothing, it is Perfection). It is indefinable and indescribable. It is as it is.

D.: There is a vastness experienced. Probably it is just below *Bhuma* but close to it. Am I right?

M.: Bhuma alone is. Nothing else. It is the mind, which says all this.

D.: Transcending the mind I feel the vastness.

M.: Yes, Yes....

The professor turned to the lady seated just a little further away from him and interpreted in Hindi to her.

She: What is the difference between meditation and distraction?

M.: No difference. When there are thoughts, it is distraction: when there are no thoughts, it is meditation. However, meditation is only practice (as distinguished from the real state of Peace.)

She: How to practice meditation?

M.: Keep off thoughts.

She: How to reconcile work with meditation?

M.: Who is the worker? Let him who works ask the question. You are always the Self. You are not the mind. It is the mind which raises these questions. Work proceeds, always in the presence of the Self only. Work is no hindrance to realisation. It is the mistaken identity of the worker that troubles one. Get rid of the false identity.

The Professor: Is not the state of non-consciousness close to Infinite Consciousness?

M.: Consciousness alone remains and nothing more.

D.: Sri Bhagavan's silence is itself a powerful force. It brings about a certain peace of mind in us.

M.: Silence is never-ending speech. Vocal speech obstructs the other speech of silence. In silence one is in intimate contact with the surroundings. The silence of Dakshinamurti removed the doubts of the four sages. *Mouna vyakhya prakatita tatvam* (Truth expounded by silence.) Silence is said to be exposition. Silence is so potent.

For vocal speech, organs of speech are necessary and they precede speech. But the other speech lies even beyond thought. It is in short transcendent speech or unspoken words, *para vak*.

D.: Is there knowledge in Realisation?

M.: Absence of knowledge is sleep. There is knowledge in Realisation. But this knowledge differs from the ordinary one of the relation of subject and object. It is absolute knowledge. Knowledge has two meanings:

(1) *vachyartha* = *vritti* = Literal meaning.

(2) *lakshyartha* = *Jnana* = *Self* = *Swarupa* = Secondary significance.

D.: With *vritti* one sees knowledge.

M.: Quite so, he also confounds *vritti* with knowledge. *Vritti* is a mode of mind. You are not the mind. You are beyond it.

The Lady: There is sometimes an irresistible desire to remain in *Brahma-akara-vritti*.

M.: It is good. It must be cultivated until it becomes *sahaja* (natural). Then it culminates as *swarupa*, one's own self.

Later Sri Bhagavan explained: *Vritti* is often mistaken for consciousness. It is only a phenomenon and operates in the region

of *abhasa* (reflected consciousness). The knowledge lies beyond relative knowledge and ignorance. It is not in the shape of *vritti*. There are no subject and object in it.

Vritti belongs to the *rajasic* (active) mind. The *satvic* mind (mind is repose) is free from it. The *satvic* is the witness of the *rajasic*. It is no doubt true consciousness. Still it is called *satvic* mind because the knowledge of being witness is the function of *abhasa* (reflected consciousness) only. Mind is the *abhasa*. Such knowledge implies mind. But the mind is by itself inoperative. Therefore it is called *satvic* mind.

Such is the *jivanmukta's* state. It is also said that his mind is dead. Is it not a paradox that a *jivanmukta* has a mind and that it is dead? This has to be conceded in argument with ignorant folk.

It is also said that Brahman is only the *jivanmukta's* mind. How can one speak of him as *Brahmavid* (knower of Brahman). Brahman can never be an object to be known. This is, however, in accordance with common parlance.

Satvic mind is surmised of the *jivanmukta* and of *Iswara*. "Otherwise," they argue, "how does the *jivanmukta* live and act?" The *satvic* mind has to be admitted as a concession to argument.

The *satvic* mind is in fact the Absolute consciousness. The object to be witnessed and the witness finally merge together and Absolute consciousness alone reigns supreme. It is not a state of *sunya* (blank) or ignorance. It is the *swarupa* (Real Self). Some say that mind arises from consciousness followed by reflection (*abhasa*); others say that the *abhasa* (reflection) arises first followed by the mind. In fact both are simultaneous.

The Professor asked Sri Bhagavan to extend His Grace to him although he would soon be a thousand miles off. Sri Bhagavan said that time and space are only concepts of mind. But *swarupa* (the Real Self) lies beyond mind, time and space. Distance does not count in the Self.

The lady with him was most reluctant to leave the Master and return home. The Master said, "Think that you are always in my presence. That will make you feel right." They left after dusk.

Talk 69.

There were reports of the above said Professor's University lectures in the *Hindu*. The lecturer had emphasised the necessity for birth control and discussed the various possibilities of making the man feel his responsibilities so that birth control might be automatic. The Master, on hearing it, casually remarked. "Let them find out the method of dying." [Here death refers to that of the ego (*ahankar*).]

24th July, 1935

Talk 70.

Sri Raju Sastrigal asked Sri Bhagavan about *nada*, *bindu* and *kala*.

M.: They are in Vedanta terminology *prana, mana, buddhi* (the life-current, mind and intellect). In the Tantras *nada* is said to be subtle sound with *tejas* - light - in it. This light is said to be the body of Siva. When it develops and sound is submerged, it becomes *bindu*. To be full of light (*tejomaya*) is the aim. *Kala* is a part of the *bindu*.

Talk 71.

CHRONOLOGICAL SEQUENCE OF THE MASTER'S STAY IN DIFFERENT PLACES AT TIRUVANNAMALAI

1896. Arrived at Tiruvannamalai and stayed in the temple premises, beneath the tree, in the interior of the underground cellar, *Pathala Lingam*, sometimes in the *gopurams*, etc.

1897 (early), removed to Gurumurtam. Stayed in the shrine and in the adjoining mango grove (18 months).

1898 (September) in Pavalakunru.

1899 (February) on the hill in caves, the mango tree cave and Virupaksha cave.

1905. Stayed in Pachiamman Koil for six months during the plague ravages. Again on the hill.

1908. January, February and March in Pachiamman Koil. Again on the hill.

1916. Skandasramam.

1922. The Ramanasramam site on the southern slope of the Hill.

25th September, 1935

Talk 72.

Mr. K. S. N. Iyer, a railway officer, asked about *japa*.

M.: The utterance and then remembrance and later meditation are the successive stages finally ending in involuntary and eternal *japa*. The *japakarta* (doer of *japa*) of that kind is the Self. Of all the *japas*, 'Who am I?' is the best.

27th September, 1935

Talk 73.

Mr. Ekanatha Rao, the engineer, asked, "What about the despondency of not obtaining any encouragement from the Master - much less his Grace?"

M.: It is ignorance only. The quest must be made as to who is despondent and so on. It is the phantom of the ego arising after sleep which falls a prey to such thoughts. In deep sleep the person was not afflicted. Who is afflicted now while awake? The sleep state is about the normal one. Let him search and find out.

D.: But there is no incentive for want of encouragement.

M.: Does not one find some kind of peace while in meditation? That is the sign of progress. That peace will be deeper and more prolonged with continued practice. It will also lead to the goal. *Bhagavad Gita* - Chapter XIV - the final verses speak of *gunatita* (one who has transcended the *gunas*). That is the final stage.

The earlier stages are *asuddha satva* (impure being), *misra satva* (mixed being), and *suddha satva* (Pure Being).

Of these, the impure being is when overpowered by *rajas* and *tamas*; the mixed being is that state in which the being - *satva* - asserts itself spasmodically; the *suddha satva* overpowers *rajas* and *tamas*. After these successive stages there comes the state transcending *gunas*.

Talk 74.

Mr. Frydman, the engineer, writes in one of his letters: "Maharshi is with me not only when I think of Him but also when I am not thinking of Him. Otherwise, how do I live?"

Talk 75.

Mr. Grant Duff, formerly in a foreign embassy, writes: .... Pay my respects to Maharshi. He appears to me in my thoughts not only as an *answer* to my questions but also as *Presence*....

29th September, 1935

Talk 76.

Mr. K. S. N. Iyer said that he was not convinced how spiritual life could be reconciled to worldly activities. The Master in answer cited some verses from *Yoga Vasishta*. (The original is said to be millions of verses, of which only 32,000 stanzas are now found in the Sanskrit text. It was condensed to 6,000 and called *Laghu Vasishta*. The latter has been rendered in Tamil in 2,050 stanzas).

D.: Without the mind concentrating on it the work cannot be performed satisfactorily. How is the mind to be spiritually disposed and the work kept going as well?

M.: The mind is only a projection from the Self, appearing in the waking state. In deep sleep, you do not say whose son you are and so on. As soon as you wake up you say you are so and so, and recognise the world and so on. The world is only *lokah*, *lokah* = *lokyate iti lokah* (what is perceived is the world). That which is seen is *lokah* or the world. Which is the eye that sees it? That is the ego which rises and sinks periodically. But you exist always. Therefore That which lies beyond the ego is consciousness - the Self.

In deep sleep mind is merged and not destroyed. That which merges reappears. It may happen in meditation also. But the mind which is destroyed cannot reappear. The yogi's aim must be to destroy it and not to sink in *laya*. In the peace of *dhyana*, *laya* ensues but it is not enough. It must be supplemented by other practices for destroying the mind. Some people have gone into *samadhi* with a trifling thought

and after a long time awakened in the trail of the same thought. In the meantime generations have passed away in the world. Such a *yogi* has not destroyed his mind. Its destruction is the non-recognition of it as being apart from the Self. Even now the mind *is not*. Recognise it. How can you do it if not in everyday activities. They go on automatically. Know that the mind promoting them is not real but a phantom proceeding from the Self. That is how the mind is destroyed.

Talk 77.

The Master, while referring to the Bible for "Be still and know that I am God", Psalm 46, found in the Ecclesiastes. "There is one alone and there is no second" and "The wise man's heart is at the right hand and a fool's heart is at the left."

Talk 78.

A man from Masulla asked the Master: "How to realise the Self?"

M.: Everyone has experience of the Self every moment of his life.

D.: But the Self is not realised as one would like.

M.: Yes. The present experience is *viparita* - different from real. What is not is confounded with what is.

D.: How to find the Atman?

M.: There is no investigation into the Atman. The investigation can only be into the non-self. Elimination of the non-self is alone possible. The Self being always self evident will shine forth of itself.

The Self is called by different names - Atman, God, *Kundalini*, *mantra*, etc. Hold any one of them and the Self becomes manifest. God is no other than the Self. *Kundalini* is now showing forth as the mind. When the mind is traced to its source it is *Kundalini*. *Mantra japa* leads to elimination of other thoughts and to concentration on the *mantra*. The *mantra* finally merges into the Self and shines forth as the Self.

D.: How long is a Guru necessary for Self-Realisation?

M.: Guru is necessary so long as there is the *laghu*. (Pun on Guru = heavy; *laghu* = light). *Laghu* is due to the self-imposed but wrong limitation of the Self. God, on being worshipped, bestows steadiness

in devotion which leads to surrender. On the devotee surrendering, God shows His mercy by manifesting as the Guru. The Guru, otherwise God, guides the devotee, saying that God is in you and He is the Self. This leads to introversion of the mind and finally to realisation.

Effort is necessary up to the state of realisation. Even then the Self should spontaneously become evident. Otherwise happiness will not be complete. Up to that state of spontaneity there must be effort in some form or another.

D.: Our work-a-day life is not compatible with such efforts.

M.: Why do you think that you are active? Take the gross example of your arrival here. You left home in a cart, took train, alighted at the Railway Station here, got into a cart there and found yourself in this Asramam. When asked, you say that you travelled here all the way from your town. Is it true? Is it not a fact that you remained as you were and there were movements of conveyances all along the way. Just as those movements are confounded with your own, so also the other activities. They are not your own. They are God's activities.

D.: Such idea will lead to blankness of mind and the work will not progress well.

M.: Go up to that blankness and tell me afterwards.

D.: They say that a visit to Sages helps Self-Realisation?

M.: Yes. So it does.

D.: Will not my present visit to you bring it about?

M.: (After a short pause) What is to be brought about? To whom? Consider; investigate. To whom is this doubt. If the source is traced the doubt will disappear.

Talk 79.

An engineer asked: "The animals seem to conform to their own natural laws in spite of their environment and changes. Whereas man flouts social law and is not bound by any definite system. He seems to be degenerating whereas the animals are steady. Is it not so?"

M.: (After a long time). The Upanishads and scriptures say that human beings are only animals unless they are realised beings. Possibly they are worse also.

3rd October, 1935

Talk 80.

A very devoted and simple disciple had lost his only son, a child of three years. The next day he arrived at the Asramam with his family. The Master spoke with reference to them: "Training of mind helps one to bear sorrows and bereavements with courage. But the loss of one's offspring is said to be the worst of all griefs. Grief exists only so long as one considers oneself to be of a definite form. If the form is transcended one will know that the one Self is eternal. There is no death nor birth. That which is born is only the body. The body is the creation of the ego. But the ego is not ordinarily perceived without the body. It is always identified with the body. It is the thought which matters. Let the sensible man consider if he knew his body in deep sleep. Why does he feel it in the waking state? But, although the body was not felt in sleep, did not the Self exist then? How was he in deep sleep? How is he when awake? What is the difference? Ego rises up and that is waking. Simultaneously thoughts arise. Let him find out to whom are the thoughts. Wherefrom do they arise? They must spring up from the conscious Self. Apprehending it even vaguely helps the extinction of the ego. Thereafter the realisation of the one Infinite Existence becomes possible. In that state there are no individuals other than the Eternal Existence. Hence there is no thought of death or wailing.

"If a man considers he is born he cannot avoid the fear of death. Let him find out if he has been born or if the Self has any birth. He will discover that the Self always exists, that the body which is born resolves itself into thought and that the emergence of thought is the root of all mischief. Find wherefrom thoughts emerge. Then you will abide in the ever-present inmost Self and be free from the idea of birth or the fear of death."

A disciple asked how to do it.

M.: The thoughts are only *vasanas* (predispositions), accumulated in innumerable births before. Their annihilation is the aim. The state free from *vasanas* is the primal state and eternal state of purity.

D.: It is not clear yet.

M.: Everyone is aware of the eternal Self. He sees so many dying but still believes himself eternal. Because it is the Truth. Unwillingly the natural Truth asserts itself. The man is deluded by the intermingling of the conscious Self with the insentient body. This delusion must end.

D.: How will it end?

M.: That which is born must end. The delusion is only concomitant with the ego. It rises up and sinks. But the Reality never rises nor sinks. It remains Eternal. The master who has realised says so; the disciple hears, thinks over the words and realises the Self. There are two ways of putting it.

The ever-present Self needs no efforts to be realised, Realisation is already there. Illusion alone is to be removed. Some say the word from the mouth of the Master removes it instantaneously. Others say that meditation, etc., are necessary for realisation. Both are right; only the standpoints differ.

D.: Is *dhyana* necessary?

M.: The Upanishads say that even the Earth is in eternal *dhyana*.

D.: How does Karma help it? Will it not add to the already heavy load to be removed?

M.: Karma done unselfishly purifies the mind and helps to fix it in meditation.

D.: What if one meditates incessantly without Karma?

M.: Try and see. The *vasanas* will not let you do it. *Dhyana* comes only step by step with the gradual weakening of the *vasanas* by the Grace of the Master.

15th October, 1935

Talk 81.

Dr. Bernhard Bey, an American Chemist who had interested himself in *Vedanta* for the last twenty years, now in India, came on a visit to the Master. He asked: "How is *abhyasa* to be made? I am trying to find the Light." (He himself explained *abhyasa* as concentration = one-pointedness of mind.)

The Master asked, what was his *abhyasa* till now.

The visitor said he concentrated on the nasal base, but his mind wandered.

M.: Is there a mind?

Another devotee gently put in: The mind is only a collection of thoughts.

M.: To whom are the thoughts? If you try to locate the mind, the mind vanishes and the Self alone remains. Being alone, there can be no one-pointedness or otherwise.

D.: It is so difficult to understand this. If something concrete is said, it can be readily grasped. *Japa*, *dhyana*, etc., are more concrete.

M.: 'Who am I?' is the best *japa*.

What could be more concrete than the Self? It is within each one's experience every moment. Why should he try to catch anything outside, leaving out the Self? Let each one try to find out the known Self instead of searching for the unknown something beyond.

D.: Where shall I meditate on the Atman? I mean in which part of the body?

M.: The Self should manifest itself. That is all that is wanted.

A devotee gently added: On the right of the chest, there is the Heart, the seat of the Atman.

Another devotee: The illumination is in that centre when the Self is realised.

M.: Quite so.

D.: How to turn the mind away from the world?

M.: Is there the world? I mean apart from the Self? Does the world say that it exists? It is you who say that there is a world. Find out the Self who says it.

16th October, 1935

Talk 82.

A question was raised about the differences in the various *samadhis*.

M.: When the senses are merged in darkness it is deep sleep; when merged in light it is *samadhi*. Just as a passenger when asleep in a carriage is unaware of the motion, the halting or the unharnessing of the horses, so also a *jnani* in *sahaja samadhi* is unaware of the

happenings, waking, dream and deep sleep. Here sleep corresponds to the unharnessing of the horses. And *samadhi* corresponds to the halting of the horses, because the senses are ready to act just as the horses are ready to move after halting.

In *samadhi* the head does not bend down because the senses are there though inactive; whereas the head bends down in sleep because the senses are merged in darkness. In *kevala samadhi*, the activities (vital and mental), waking, dream and sleep, are only merged, ready to emerge after regaining the state other than *samadhi*. In *sahaja samadhi* the activities, vital and mental, and the three states are destroyed, never to reappear. However, others notice the *jnani* active *e.g*., eating, talking, moving etc. He is not himself aware of these activities, whereas others are aware of his activities. They pertain to his body and not to his Real Self, *swarupa*. For himself, he is like the sleeping passenger - or like a child interrupted from sound sleep and fed, being unaware of it. The child says the next day that he did not take milk at all and that he went to sleep without it. Even when reminded he cannot be convinced. So also in *sahaja samadhi*.

Sushumna pare leena. Here *sushumna* refers to *tapo marge* whereas the *para nadi* refers to *jnana marga*.

Talk 83.

The Master relating some stories of the *bhaktas* told how Sri Krishna served Eknath for twelve years, how Panduranga relieved Sakku Bai from her home prison and enabled her to visit Pandharpur.

Then he recollected the appearance of a mysterious Moulvi on his way from Madura to Tiruvannamalai in 1896, how he appeared, spoke and disappeared suddenly.

Talk 84.

Mr. Grant Duff asked the Master if any mongoose had had anything to do with him. The Master said, "Yes. It was the occasion of Ardra and Jayanti, I was living up the hill in Skandasramam. Streams of visitors were climbing up the hill from the town A mongoose, larger than the ordinary size, of golden hue (not grey as a mongoose is), with no black spot on its tail as is usual with the wild mongoose, passed these crowds fearlessly. People took

it to be a tame one belonging to someone in the crowd. The animal went straight to Palaniswami, who was having a bath in the spring by the Virupaksha Cave. He stroked the creature and patted it. It followed him into the cave, inspected every nook and corner and left the place and joined the crowd to pass up to Skandasramam. I noticed it. Everyone was struck by its attractive appearance and its fearless movements. It came up to me, got on my lap and rested there some time. Then it raised itself up, looked about and moved down; it went round the whole place and I followed it lest it should be harmed by the unwary visitors or by the peacocks. Two peacocks of the place looked at it inquisitively, whereas the mongoose moved nonchalantly from place to place and finally disappeared into the rocks on the south-east of the Asramam."

Talk 85.

The same gentleman asked the Master about the material relation between memory and will and their relation to the mind.

M.: They are functions of the mind The mind is the outcome of the ego and the ego is from the Self.

6th November, 1935

Talk 86.

The Master gave the true significance of the Christian faith thus:

Christ is the ego.

The Cross is the body.

When the ego is crucified, and it perishes, what survives is the Absolute Being (God), (*cf.* "I and my Father are one") and this glorious survival is called Resurrection.

Talk 87.

Major A. W. Chadwick, an ardent English devotee, asked, "Why did Jesus call out 'My God! My God!' while being crucified?"

M.: It might have been an intercession on behalf of the two thieves who were crucified with Him. Again a *jnani* has attained liberation even while alive, here and now. It is immaterial as to how, where and when he leaves his body. Some *jnanis* may appear to suffer, others may be

in *samadhi*, still others may disappear from sight before death. But that makes no difference to their *jnana*. Such suffering is apparent only to the onlooker and not to the *jnani*, for he has already transcended the mistaken identity of the Self with the body.

Talk 88.

The same gentleman asked: What is the significance of Christ in the illumination of St. Paul?

M.: Illumination is absolute, not associated with forms. After St. Paul became Self-conscious he identified the illumination with Christ-consciousness.

D.: But Paul was not a lover of Christ then?

M.: Love or hatred is immaterial. The thought of Christ was there. It is similar to Ravana's case. Christ-consciousness and Self-Realisation are all the same.

Talk 89.

M.: Karpura arati is symbolic of the burning away of the mind by the light of illumination, *vibhuti* (sacred ashes) is Siva (Absolute Be-ing) and *kunkuma* (vermilion powder) is Sakti (consciousness).

Vibhuti is of two kinds: *Para vibhuti* and *apara vibhuti*. The sacred ashes are of the latter class. The *para* is what remains over after all the dross has been burnt away by the Fire of Realisation. It is Absolute Being.

Talk 90.

Again, the Trinity was explained:

God the Father represents Isvara

God the Holy Spirit represents Atman

God the Son represents Guru

Isvaro gururatmeti murti bheda vibhagine vyomavad vyapta dehaya dakshinamurtaye namah:

Meaning that God appears to his devotee in the form of a Guru (son of God) and points out to him the immanence of the Holy Spirit. That is to say that God is spirit, that this spirit is immanent everywhere and that the Self must be realised, which is the same as realising God.

Talk 91.

A Bengali visitor asked: How is the mind controlled?

M.: What do you call 'the mind'?

D.: When I sit down to think of God, thoughts wander away to other objects. I want to control those thoughts.

M.: In the *Bhagavad Gita* it is said that it is the nature of the mind to wander. One must bring one's thoughts to bear on God. By long practice the mind is controlled and made steady.

The wavering of the mind is a weakness arising from the dissipation of its energy in the shape of thoughts. When one makes the mind stick to one thought the energy is conserved, and the mind becomes stronger.

D.: What is the meaning of the strength of the mind?

M.: Its ability to concentrate on one thought without being distracted.

D.: How is that achieved?

M.: By practice. A devotee concentrates on God; a seeker, follower of the *jnana-marga*, seeks the Self. The practice is equally difficult for both.

D.: Even if the mind is brought to bear on the search for the Self, after a long struggle the mind begins to elude him and the man is not aware of the mischief until after some time.

M.: So it would be. In the earlier stages the mind reverts to the search at long intervals; with continued practice it reverts at shorter intervals until finally it does not wander at all. It is then that the dormant *sakti* manifests. The *satvic* mind is free from thoughts whereas the *rajasic* mind is full of them. The *sattvic* mind resolves itself into the Life-current.

D.: Can one keep the mind away from entering into the phase of thoughts before one experiences the current?

M.: Yes; the current is pre-existent.

7th November, 1935

Talk 92.

A visitor said: Some say that one should practise meditation on gross objects only: it may be disastrous if one constantly seeks to kill the mind.

M.: For whom is it disastrous? Can there be disaster apart from the Self?

Unbroken 'I-I' is the ocean infinite, the ego, 'I' thought, remains only a bubble on it and is called *jiva*, *i.e.*, individual soul. The bubble too is water; when it bursts it only mixes in the ocean. When it remains a bubble it is still a part of the ocean. Ignorant of this simple truth, innumerable methods under different denominations, such as yoga, *bhakti*, karma..... each again with many modifications, are being taught with great skill and in intricate detail only to entice the seekers and confuse their minds. So also are the religions and sects and dogmas. What are they all for? Only for knowing the Self. They are aids and practices required for knowing the Self.

Objects perceived by the senses are spoken of as immediate knowledge (*pratyaksha*). Can anything be as direct as the Self - always experienced without the aid of the senses? Sense-perceptions can only be indirect knowledge, and not direct knowledge. Only one's own awareness is direct knowledge, as is the common experience of one and all. No aids are needed to know one's own Self, *i.e.*, to be aware.

The one Infinite Unbroken Whole (plenum) becomes aware of itself as 'I'. This is its original name. All other names, *e.g.*, OM, are later growths. Liberation is only to remain aware of the Self. The *mahavakya* "I am *Brahman*" is its authority. Though the 'I' is always experienced, yet one's attention has to be drawn to it. Only then does knowledge dawn. Thus the need for the instruction of the Upanishads and of wise sages.

9th November, 1935

Talk 93.

All are aware of their own Self only. Wonder of wonders! They take what is not as what is, or they see the phenomena apart from the Self. Only so long as there is the knower is there knowledge of all kinds (direct, inferential, intellectual etc.); should the knower vanish they all vanish together with him; their validity is of the same degree as his.

Talk 94.

A man prayed to the Master to pardon his sins. He was told that it would be enough if he took care to see that his mind did not trouble him.

13th November, 1935

Talk 95.

A question was raised as follows by Maj. A. W. Chadwick:-

Mr. Edward Carpenter, a certain mystic, has written in a book that he had Self-Realisation on some occasions and that its effects lasted sometimes afterwards, only to be gradually lost. Whereas *Sri Ramana Gita* says, "*Granthi* (knot = bondage), snapped once, is snapped for ever." In the case of this mystic, the bondage seems to have persisted even after Self-Realisation. How can it be so?

The Master cited *Kaivalya* as follows:-

> The disciple, after realising the all-shining, unitary, unbroken state of Being-Knowledge-Bliss, surrendered himself to the master and humbly prayed to know how he could repay the master's Grace. The Master said:
>
> "My reward consists in your permanent unbroken Bliss. Do not slip away from it."

D.: Having once experienced the Supreme Bliss, how can one stray away from it?

M.: Oh yes! It happens. The predisposition adhering to him from time immemorial will draw him out and so ignorance overtakes him.

D.: What are the obstacles to remaining steady in unbroken Bliss? How can they be overcome?

M.: The obstacles are:

(1) Ignorance which is forgetfulness of one's pure being.

(2) Doubt which consists in wondering if even the experience was of the Real or of the unreal.

(3) Error which consists in the "I-am-the-body" idea, and thinking that the world is real. These are overcome by hearing the truth, reflection on it and concentration.

The Master continued: Experience is said to be temporary or permanent. The first experience is temporary and by concentration it can become permanent. In the former the bondage is not

completely destroyed; it remains subtle and reasserts itself in due course. But in the latter it is destroyed root and branch, never to appear again. The expression *yogabhrashta* (those who have fallen down from yoga) in *Srimad Bhagavad Gita* refers to the former class of men.

D.: Is then hearing the Truth meant only for a limited few?

M.: It is of two kinds. The ordinary one is to hear it enunciated and explained by a master. However, the right one is to raise the question for oneself and seek and find the answer in oneself as the unbroken 'I-I'.

To be reflecting on this experience is the second stage. To remain one-pointed in it is the third stage.

D.: Can the temporary experience be called *samadhi*?

M.: No. It forms part of the third stage.

D.: It looks then as if even hearing the Truth is limited to a very few.

M.: The seekers fall into two classes; *kritopasaka* and *akritopasaka*. The former having already overcome his predisposition by steady devotion, his mind thus made pure, has had some kind of experience but does not comprehend it; as soon as instructed by a competent master, permanent experience results.

The other class of seeker needs great effort to achieve this end. How will the hearing of the Truth, reflection and concentration help him?

They comprise *upasana* (the nearest approach to Truth) and will end in his Self-Realization.

The fourth stage is the final one of liberation. Even there some distinction is made according to the degree, as

(1) the knower of the Brahman (*Brahmavid*)

(2) *Brahmavid-vara*

(3) *Brahmavid-varya*

(4) *Brahmavid-varishta*

But all of them are in fact liberated even while alive.

Talk 96.

Maj. A. W. Chadwick: Of what nature is the realisation of Westerners who relate that they have had flashes of cosmic consciousness?

M.: It came as a flash and disappeared as such. That which has a beginning must also end. Only when the ever-present consciousness is realised will it be permanent. Consciousness is indeed always with us. Everyone knows 'I am!' No one can deny his own being. The man in deep slumber is not aware; while awake he seems to be aware. But it is the same person. There is no change in the one who slept and the one who is now awake. In deep sleep he was not aware of his body; there was no body-consciousness. In the wakeful state he is aware of his body; there is body-consciousness. Therefore the difference lies in the emergence of body-consciousness and not in any change in the Real Consciousness. The body and body-consciousness arise together and sink together. All this amounts to saying that there are no limitations in deep sleep, whereas there are limitations in the waking state. These limitations are the bondage; the feeling 'The body is I' is the error. This false sense of 'I' must go. The real 'I' is always there. It is *here and now*. It never appears anew and disappears again. That which is must also persist for ever. That which appears anew will also be lost. Compare deep sleep and waking. The body appears in one state but not in the other. Therefore the body will be lost. The consciousness was pre-existent and will survive the body. In fact, there is no one who does not say 'I am'. The wrong knowledge of 'I am the body' is the cause of all the mischief. This wrong knowledge must go. That is Realisation. Realisation is not acquisition of anything new nor it is a new faculty. It is only removal of all camouflage.

Maj. Chadwick: I try to shake off the body.

M.: A man shakes off his clothes and remains alone and free. The Self is unlimited and is not confined to the body. How can the body be shaken off? Where will he leave it? Wherever it is, it is his still.

Maj. Chadwick: (Laughter.)

M.: The ultimate Truth is so simple. It is nothing more than being in the pristine state. This is all that need be said.

Still, it is a wonder that to teach this simple Truth there should come into being so many religions, creeds, methods and disputes among them and so on! Oh the pity! Oh the pity!

Maj. Chadwick: But people will not be content with simplicity; they want complexity.

M.: Quite so. Because they want something elaborate and attractive and puzzling, so many religions have come into existence and each of them is so complex and each creed in each religion has its own adherents and antagonists.

For example, an ordinary Christian will not be satisfied unless he is told that God is somewhere in the far-off Heavens not to be reached by us unaided. Christ alone knew Him and Christ alone can guide us. Worship Christ and be saved. If told the simple truth - "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you" - he is not satisfied and will read complex and far-fetched meanings in such statements. Mature minds alone can grasp the simple Truth in all its nakedness.

Maj. Chadwick later expressed a certain involuntary fear while meditating. He feels the spirit separated from the gross body and the sensation creates a fright.

M.: To whom is the fright? It is all due to the habit of identifying the body with the Self. Repeated experience of separation will make one familiar and the fright will cease.

19th November, 1935

Talk 97.

One Mr. Ramachandar, a gentleman from Ambala, asked where the Heart is and what Realisation is.

M.: The Heart is not physical; it is spiritual. *Hridayam = hrit + ayam* - This is the centre. It is that from which thoughts arise, on which they subsist and where they are resolved. The thoughts are the content of the mind and, they shape the universe. The Heart is the centre of all. *Yatova imani bhutani jayante* (that from which these beings come

into existence) etc. is said to be Brahman in the Upanishads. That is the Heart. Brahman is the Heart.

D.: How to realise the Heart?

M.: There is no one who even for a trice fails to experience the Self. For no one admits that he ever stands apart from the Self. He is the Self. The Self is the Heart.

D.: It is not clear.

M.: In deep sleep you exist; awake, you remain. The same Self is in both states. The difference is only in the awareness and the non-awareness of the world. The world rises with the mind and sets with the mind. That which rises and sets is not the Self. The Self is different, giving rise to the mind, sustaining it and resolving it. So the Self is the underlying principle.

When asked who you are, you place your hand on the right side of the breast and say 'I am'. There you involuntarily point out the Self. The Self is thus known. But the individual is miserable because he confounds the mind and the body with the Self. This confusion is due to wrong knowledge. Elimination of wrong knowledge is alone needed. Such elimination results in Realisation.

D.: How to control the mind?

M.: What is mind? Whose is the mind?

D.: Mind always wanders. I cannot control it.

M.: It is the nature of the mind to wander. You are not the mind. The mind springs up and sinks down. It is impermanent, transitory, whereas you are eternal. There is nothing but the Self. To inhere in the Self is the thing. Never mind the mind. If its source is sought, it will vanish leaving the Self unaffected.

D.: So one need not seek to control the mind?

M.: There is no mind to control if you realise the Self. The mind vanishing, the Self shines forth. In the realised man the mind may be active or inactive, the Self alone remains for him. For the mind, the body and the world are not separate from the Self. They rise from and sink into the Self. They do not remain apart from the Self. Can they be different from the Self? Only be aware of the Self. Why worry about these shadows? How do they affect the Self?

Talk 98.

Bhagavan further explained: The Self is the Heart. The Heart is self-luminous. Light arises from the Heart and reaches the brain, which is the seat of the mind. The world is seen with the mind, that is, by the reflected light of the Self. It is perceived with the aid of the mind. When the mind is illumined it is aware of the world. When it is not itself so illumined, it is not aware of the world. If the mind is turned in towards the source of light, objective knowledge ceases and Self alone shines forth as the Heart.

The moon shines by the reflected light of the sun. When the sun has set, the moon is useful for revealing objects. When the sun has risen, no one needs the moon, although the pale disc of the moon is visible in the sky.

So it is with the mind and the Heart. The mind is useful because of its reflected light. It is used for seeing objects. When it is turned inwards, the source of illumination shines forth by itself, and the mind remains dim and useless like the moon in day-time.

Talk 99.

A sannyasi asked: It is said that the Self is beyond the mind and yet the realisation is with the mind. *Mano na manute, Manasa na matam*, and *Manasaivedamaptavyam* (The mind cannot think it. It cannot be thought of by the mind and the mind alone can realise it). How are these contradictions to be reconciled?

M.: Atman is realised with *mruta manas* (dead mind), *i.e.*, mind devoid of thoughts and turned inward. Then the mind sees its own source and becomes That. It is not as the subject perceiving an object.

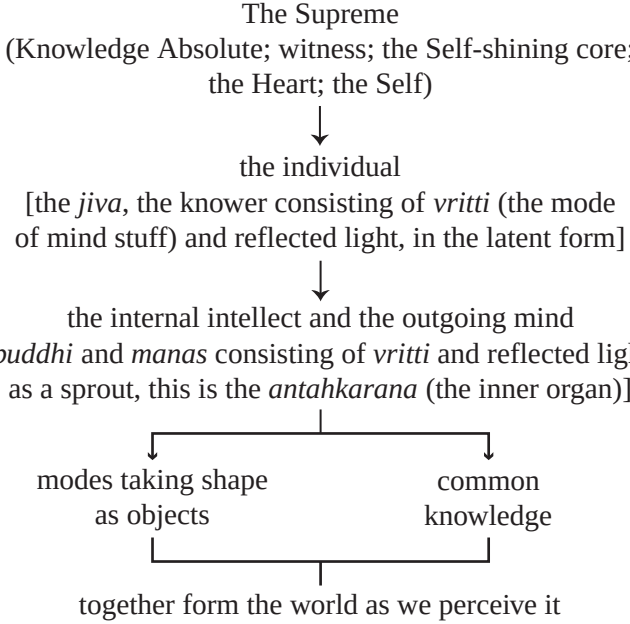
When the room is dark a lamp is necessary to illumine and eyes to cognise objects. But when the sun is risen there is no need of a lamp, and the objects are seen; and to see the sun no lamp is necessary, it is enough that you turn your eyes towards the self-luminous sun.

Similarly with the mind. To see the objects the reflected light of the mind is necessary. To see the Heart it is enough that the mind is turned towards it. Then the mind loses itself and the Heart shines forth.

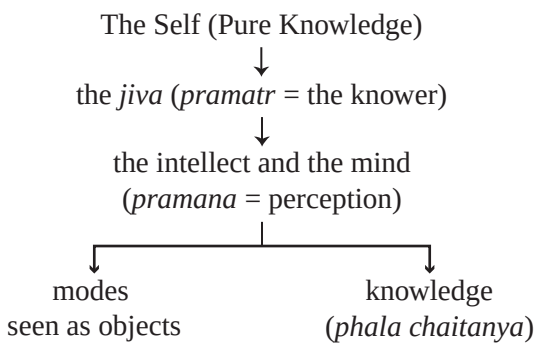
Talk 100.

Later Sri Bhagavan quoted from *Kaivalya* some verses and explained:

A


The Supreme
(Knowledge Absolute; witness; the Self-shining core;
the Heart; the Self)
the individual
[the *jiva*, the knower consisting of *vritti* (the mode
of mind stuff) and reflected light, in the latent form]
the internal intellect and the outgoing mind
[*buddhi* and *manas* consisting of *vritti* and reflected light,
as a sprout, this is the *antahkarana* (the inner organ)]
modes taking shape
as objects
common
knowledge
together form the world as we perceive it

B



The modes of mind take shape as external objects and the light reflected on the modes illumines the objects. Now neglecting the modes

of mind, look for the light illumining them. The mind becomes still and the light remains self-shining. The undulating mind (*i.e.*, the mind associated with *rajas* = activity and *tamas* = darkness) is commonly known as the mind. Devoid of *rajas* and *tamas*, it is pure and self-shining. This is Self-Realisation. Therefore the mind is said to be the means for it.

C

Pure Consciousness
(said to be the Eternal or the Ever-present Witness)

↓

(*antahkarana*)
Inner organ + the reflected light (*jiva; pramtr*)

↓

modes together with the light are said to be *prameya* = the known; of these, the objects are gross and the light is called *phala chaitanya.*

D

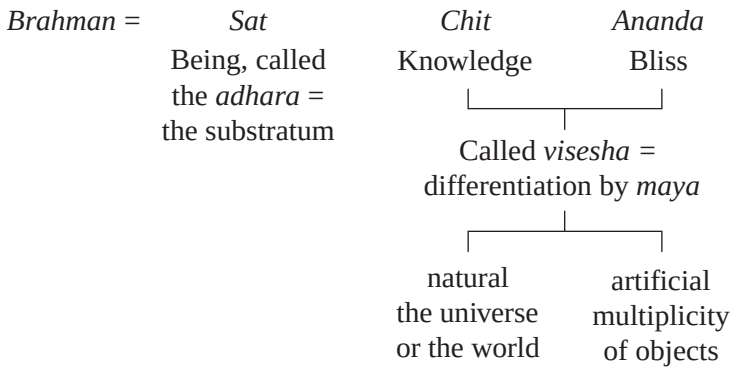
In the *jiva* the inner organ (*antahkarana*) consists of -

Satva	*Rajas*	*Tamas*
knowledge, light	modes of mind, intellect, mind	gross objects, the world

Similarly for the cosmos:-
The Cosmic mind (the Eternal Being)

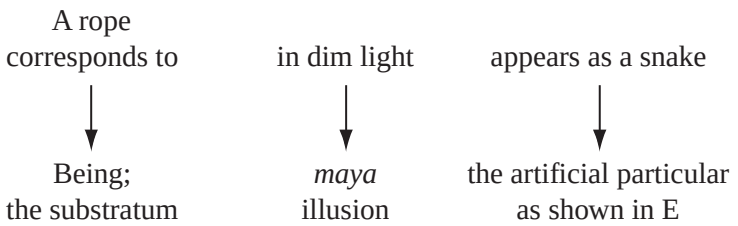
Satva	*Rajas*	*Tamas*
Isvara - the Lord of the universe	the individual *jiva*	the universe

E



Maya cannot obscure *Sat*, but it does obscure *Chit* and *Ananda*, making them appear as particulars.

F



G

Sat = Being = the substratum (*adhara*). From this proceeds the particular, namely the *jiva* who veiled by ignorance identifies himself with the gross body. Here ignorance stands for not investigating the Self. *Jiva* is in fact knowledge only; yet owing to ignorance the wrong identity with the gross body results.

H

Again, the Master illustrated it with the red-hot iron ball (*tapta-ayah-pindavat*).

A ball of iron + fire together form red-hot iron ball. The World + *Chit* = (Pure Knowledge) together form the *jiva* = the individual.

Talk 101.

A gentleman from Ambala asked: What is the rationalistic explanation of Draupadi's sari becoming endless?

M.: Spiritual matters cannot be fitted into rationalism. Spirituality is transcendental. The miracle was after Draupadi had surrendered herself. The secret lies in surrender.

D.: How to reach the Heart?

M.: Where are you now that you want to reach the Heart? Are you standing apart from the Self?

D.: I am in my body.

M.: In a particular spot, or all over?

D.: All over. I am extending all over the body.

M.: Wherefrom do you extend?

D.: I do not know.

M.: Yes. You are always in the Heart. You are never away from it in order that you should reach it. Consider how you are in deep sleep and in the waking state. These states are also not yours. They are of the ego. The consciousness remains the same and undifferentiated all through.

D.: I understand but I cannot feel it so.

M.: Whose is the ignorance? Find it out.

D.: All this is so difficult.

M.: The idea of difficulty is itself wrong. It will not help you to gain what you want. Again I ask: "Who finds it difficult?"

D.: I see that I am coming round to 'I'.

M.: Because you are always that and never away from that. There is nothing so simple as being the Self. It requires no effort, no aid. One has to leave off the wrong identity and be in his eternal, natural, inherent state.

Talk 102.

He returned with a request next day. He said, "It is said that one should receive instruction from a Guru. Mere reading of books is not helpful. I have read many books; but there is no practical help derived

from such learning. Please tell me what I should do, how I should do it, at what times, in which places, and so on."

The Master remained silent. His silence seemed to say, "Here and now, be at peace and tranquil. That is all". But the questioner could not interpret it that way; he wanted something concrete.

Talk 103.

The next day Sri Bhagavan said: These people want some *japa, dhyana*, or yoga or something similar. Without their saying what they have been doing so far what more can be said to them? Again, why *japa*, its *phalasruti*, etc.? Who is it that makes the *japa*? Who gets the fruits thereof? Can they not look to the Self? Or again, even if instructed by others to do *japa* or *dhyana*, they do it for some time, but are always looking to some results, *e.g*., visions, dreams, or thaumaturgic powers. If they do not find them they say they are not progressing or the *tapas* is not effective. Visions, etc., are no signs of progress. Mere performance of *tapas* is its progress also. Steadiness is what is required. Moreover they must entrust themselves to their *mantra* or their God and wait for its Grace. They don't do so. *Japa* even once uttered has its own good effect, whether the individual is aware or not.

28th November, 1935

Talk 104.

Mr. Kishorilal, an officer of the Railway Board, Government of India, hails from Delhi. He looks simple, gentle and dignified in behaviour. He has gastric ulcer and has arranged for his board and lodging in the town.

Five years ago he took up the study of devotional literature. He is a *bhakta* of Sri Krishna. He could feel Krishna in all that he saw. Krishna often appeared to him and made him happy. His work was going on without any effort on his part. Everything seemed to be done for him by Krishna himself.

Later he came in contact with a Mahatma who advised him to study Vedanta and take to *nirakara upasana*, *i.e*., devotion to formless Being. He has since read about seven hundred books of philosophy and Vedanta, including the Upanishads, *Ashtavakra, Avadhuta* and

Srimad Bhagavad Gita. He has also studied Sri Bhagavan's works in English and is much impressed by them.

Once when he was in the jaws of death, no other thought haunted him but that he had not yet visited Sri Bhagavan in his life. So he has come here on a short visit. He prays only for Sri Bhagavan's touch and His Grace.

The Master said to him: *atmaivaham gudakesa*, *i.e.*, I am Atman; Atman is the Guru; and Atman is Grace also. No one remains without the Atman. He is always in contact. No external touch is necessary.

D.: I understand. I do not mean external touch.

M.: Nothing is more intimate than the Atman.

D.: Again Sri Krishna appeared to me three months back and said, "Why do you ask me for *nirakara upasana*? It is only *sarva bhutesu cha atmanam sarva bhutani cha atmani*. (The Self in all and all in the Self.)

M.: That contains the whole truth. Even this is *oupacharika* (indirect). There is in fact nothing but the Atman. The world is only a projection of the mind. The mind originates from the Atman. So Atman alone is the One Being.

D.: Yet it is difficult to realise.

M.: There is nothing to realise. It is *nitya suddha buddha mukta* (the Eternal, pure, aware and liberated) state. It is natural and eternal. There is nothing new to gain. On the other hand a man must loose his ignorance. That is all.

This ignorance must be traced to its origin. To whom is this ignorance? Of what is one ignorant? There are the subject and the object. Such duality is characteristic of the mind. The mind is from the Atman.

D.: Yes. Ignorance itself cannot exist. (He finally surrendered saying, "Just as a doctor learns what is wrong with the patient and treats him accordingly, so may Sri Bhagavan do with me". He also said that he had lost all inclination to study books and learn from them.)

Talk 105.

M.: Yena asrutam srutam bhavati (*Chandogya Upanishad*). (By knowing which, all the unknown becomes known.)

Madhavaswami, Bhagavan's attendant: Are there nine methods of teaching the *Mahavakya 'Tattvamasi'* in the *Chandogya Upanishad*?

M.: No. Not so. The method is only one. Uddalaka started teaching *Sat eva Somya* (There is only Being) illustrating it with Svetaketu's fast.

(1) *Sat*, the Being in the individual, is made obvious by the fast.

(2) This (*sat*) Being is similar in all, as honey gathered from different flowers.

(3) There is no difference in the *sat* of individuals as illustrated by the state of deep sleep. The question arises - if so, why does not each know it in sleep?

(4) Because the individuality is lost. There is only *sat* left. Illustration: rivers lost in the ocean. If lost, is there *sat*?

(5) Surely - as when a tree is pruned it grows again. That is a sure sign of its life. But is it there even in that dormant condition?

(6) Yes, take the instance of salt and water. The presence of the salt in water is subtle. Though invisible to the eye it is recognised by other senses. How is one to know it? What is the other means?

(7) By enquiry, as the man left in the Gandhara forest regained his home.

(8) In evolution and involution, in manifestation and resolution, *sat* alone exists. *Tejah parasyam, devatayam* (the light merges in the Supreme).

(9) An insincere man is hurt by the touch of fire test. His insincerity is brought out by fire. Sincerity is Self-evident. A true man or a Self realised man remains happy, without being affected by the false appearances (namely the world, birth and death, etc.), whereas the false or ignorant man is miserable.

29th November, 1935

Talk 106.

Swami Yogananda with four others arrived at 8.45 a.m. He looks big, but gentle and well-groomed. He has dark flowing hair, hanging over his shoulders. The group had lunch in the Asramam.

Mr. C. R. Wright, his secretary, asked: How shall I realise God?

M.: God is an unknown entity. Moreover He is external. Whereas, the Self is always with you and it is you. Why do you leave out what is intimate and go in for what is external?

D.: What is this Self again?

M.: The Self is known to everyone but not clearly. You always exist. The Be-ing is the Self. 'I am' is the name of God. Of all the definitions of God, none is indeed so well put as the Biblical statement "*I AM THAT I AM*" in EXODUS (Chap. 3). There are other statements, such as *Brahmaivaham, Aham Brahmasmi* and *Soham*. But none is so direct as the name *JEHOVAH = I AM*. The Absolute Being is *what* is - It is the Self. It is God. Knowing the Self, God is known. In fact God is none other than the Self.

D.: Why are there good and evil?

M.: They are relative terms. There must be a subject to know the good and evil. That subject is the ego. Trace the source of the ego. It ends in the Self. The source of the ego is God. This definition of God is probably more concrete and better understood by you.

D.: So it is. How to get Bliss?

M.: Bliss is not something to be got. On the other hand you are always Bliss. This desire is born of the sense of incompleteness. To whom is this sense of incompleteness? Enquire. In deep sleep you were blissful: Now you are not so. What has interposed between that Bliss and this non-bliss? It is the ego. Seek its source and find you are Bliss.

There is nothing new to get. You have, on the other hand, to get rid of your ignorance which makes you think that you are other than Bliss. For whom is this ignorance? It is to the ego. Trace the source of the ego. Then the ego is lost and Bliss remains over. It is eternal. You are That, here and now.… That is the master key for solving all doubts. The doubts arise in the mind. The mind is born of the ego. The ego rises from the Self. Search the source of the ego and the Self is revealed. That alone remains. The universe is only expanded Self. It is not different from the Self.

D.: What is the best way of living?

M.: It differs according as one is a *jnani* or *ajnani*. A *jnani* does not find anything different or separate from the Self. All are in the Self. It is wrong to imagine that there is the world, that there is a body in it and that you dwell in the body. If the Truth is known, the universe and what is beyond it will be found to be only in the Self. The outlook

differs according to the sight of the person. The sight is from the eye. The eye must be located somewhere. If you are seeing with the gross eyes you find others gross. If with subtle eyes (*i.e.*, the mind) others appear subtle. If the eye becomes the Self, the Self being infinite, the eye is infinite. There is nothing else to see different from the Self.

He thanked Maharshi. He was told that the best way of thanking is to remain always as the Self.

Talk 107.

Later the Yogi asked: How is the spiritual uplift of the people to be effected? What are the instructions to be given them?

M.: They differ according to the temperaments of the individuals and according to the spiritual ripeness of their minds. There cannot be any instruction *en masse*.

D.: Why does God permit suffering in the world? Should He not with His omnipotence do away with it at one stroke and ordain the universal realisation of God?

M.: Suffering is the way for Realisation of God.

D.: Should He not ordain differently?

M.: It is the way.

D.: Are Yoga, religion, etc., antidotes to suffering?

M.: They help you to overcome suffering.

D.: Why should there be suffering?

M.: Who suffers? What is suffering?

No answer! Finally the Yogi rose up, prayed for Sri Bhagavan's blessings for his own work and expressed great regret for his hasty return. He looked very sincere and devoted and even emotional.

Talk 108.

In continuation of dialogue 105: Uddalaka explained that all proceeds from *sat* (as illustrated by deep sleep).

The body takes food. Food requires water. Water requires heat to digest the food. (*Tejo mulamanvichcha*) It is *sat parasyam devatayam* (merged in the Be-ing). If we are *sat sampannah* (merged in the Be-ing), how is it that we do not realise it?

M.: Just as the honey gathered from different flowers forms the bulk in a honeycomb, and each drop does not indicate wherefrom it has been collected, so also *sat sampannah* in deep sleep, death, etc., people do not recognise their individualities. They slip into that state unawares. But when they wake up they regain their original individual characteristics.

D.: Honey, though collected from different flowers, becomes the bulk and does not possess individual characteristics. But the individual parts do not also exist in the drops and they do not return to their sources. Whereas the individuals after going to deep sleep wake up individuals as formerly. How is it?

M.: Just as the rivers discharged into the ocean lose their individualities, still the waters evaporate and return as rain on the hills and through rivers to the ocean, so also the individuals going to sleep lose their individualities and yet return as individuals according to their previous *vasanas* unawares. Thus, even in death, *sat* is not lost.

D.: How can that be?

M.: See how a tree, whose branches are cut, grows again. So long as the life-source is not affected it will grow. Similarly the *samskaras* (anamneses) sink into the heart in death: they do not perish. They will in right time sprout forth from the heart. That is how the *jivas* are reborn.

D.: How does the wide universe sprout forth from such subtle *samskaras* remaining sunk in the heart?

M.: Just as a big banyan tree sprouts from a tiny seed, so the wide universe with names and forms sprouts forth from the heart.

D.: If the origin is *sat* why is it not felt?

M.: The salt in the lump is visible; it is invisible in solution. Still its existence is known by taste. Similarly *sat*, though not recognised by the intellect, can still be realised in a different way, *i.e.*, transcendentally.

D.: How?

M.: Just as a man blindfolded and left by robbers in a jungle enquires his way home and returns there, so also the ignorant one (blinded by ignorance) enquires of those not so blinded and seeks his own source and returns to it.

Then, *Gurupadesa* - "*Vang manasi sampadyate, manah prane, pranastejasi, tejah parasyam devatayam iti*."

D.: If so, a *jnani* or an *ajnani* dies in the same manner. Why is an *ajnani* reborn, whereas a *jnani* is not?

M.: Just as an innocent man *satyabhisandha* is not affected by the test of touching red hot iron but a thief is affected, so also the *sadbrahma satyabhisandha, i.e.*, a *jnani*, enters into *sat* consciously and merges, whereas the other enters unaware and is thrown out unawares also.

13th December, 1935

Talk 109.

Two gentlemen from Ambala (the Punjab) had been here for a few weeks. Just before taking leave of Sri Bhagavan one of them asked how he should remove the spiritual drowsiness of his friends or of other people in general.

M.: Have you removed your own 'spiritual drowsiness?' The force which is set up to remove your own 'drowsiness' will also operate in other centres. There is the will-power with which you can act on others. But it is on a lower plane and not desirable. Take care of yourself first.

D.: How to remove my own 'drowsiness'?

M.: Whose 'drowsiness' is it? Enquire. Turn within. Turn all your enquiries towards search for Self. The force set up within you will operate on others also.

14th December, 1935

Talk 110.

An American lady asked Bhagavan what his experiences of *samadhi* were. When suggested that she should relate her experiences and ask if they were right, she replied that Sri Bhagavan's experiences ought to be correct and should be known, whereas her own were unimportant. She thus wanted to know if Sri Bhagavan felt his body hot or cold in *samadhi*, if he spent the first three and a half years of his stay at Tiruvannamalai in prayers and so on.

M.: Samadhi transcends mind and speech and cannot be described. For example, the state of deep slumber cannot be described; *samadhi* state can still less be explained.

D.: But I know that I am unconscious in deep sleep.

M.: Consciousness and unconsciousness are only modes of the mind. *Samadhi* transcends the mind.

D.: Still you can say what it is like.

M.: You will know only when you are in *samadhi*.

16th December, 1935

Talk 111.

A Telugu gentleman asked about *Brahma bhavana*.

M.: Not to think "I am Brahman" or "All is Brahman" is itself *jivanmukti*.

He asked about inspired action.

M.: Let activities go on. They do not affect the pure Self.

17th December, 1935

Talk 112.

Mr. P. Brunton, while reading *Upadesa Manjari*, came across the statement that the ego, the world and God are all unreal. He desired to use a different word for God or at least a qualifying adjective, *e.g.*, the Creative Force or personal God.

Sri Bhagavan explained that God means *SAMASHTI - i.e.*, all that is, *plus* the Be-ing - in the same way as 'I' means the individual *plus* the Be-ing, and the world means the variety plus Be-ing. The Be-ing is in all cases real. The all, the variety and the individual is in each case unreal. So also in the union of the real and the unreal, the mixing up or the false identification is wrong. It amounts to saying *sad-asadvilakshana, i.e.*, transcending the real and the unreal - *sat* and *asat*. Reality is that which transcends all concepts, including that of God. Inasmuch as the name of God is used, it cannot be true. The Hebrew word *Jehovah* = (I am) expresses God correctly. Absolute Be-ing is beyond expression.

The word cannot be replaced nor need it be replaced. The Englishman casually said that in prehistoric ages there was spirituality but not high intellect, whereas intellect has now developed. Sri Bhagavan pointed out that *intellect* raises the question "whose intellect?" The answer is, of the *Self*. So intellect is a tool of the Self. The Self uses intellect for measuring variety. Intellect is not the Self nor apart from the Self. The Self alone is eternal. Intellect is only a phenomenon. People speak of the development of variety as being the development of intellect. Intellect was always there. *Dhata yatha parvam akalpayat* (The Creator created just as before). Consider your own state, day by day. There is no intellect in dreamless deep sleep. But it is there now. There is no intellect in a child. It develops with age. How could there be manifestation of intellect without its seed in the sleep state and in the child? Why go to history to teach this fundamental fact? The level of truth of history is only the level of truth of the individual.

Talk 113.

A Telugu gentleman asked about Karma Yoga. Sri Bhagavan said that the man should act as an actor on the stage. In all actions there is the *sat* as the underlying principle. "Remember it and act." He asked about the purity of mind - *chitta suddhi*. Sri Bhagavan said that *chitta suddhi* is to engage in one thought only to the exclusion of all others. It is otherwise called one-pointedness of the mind. The practice of meditation purifies the mind.

23rd December, 1935

Talk 114.

Baron Von Veltheim - Ostran, an East German Baron, asked, There should be harmony between knowledge of the Self and knowledge of the world. They must develop side by side. Is it right? Does Maharshi agree?

M.: Yes.

D.: Beyond the intellect and before wisdom dawns there will be pictures of the world passing before one's consciousness. Is it so?

Sri Bhagavan pointed out the parallel passage in *Dakshinamurti stotram* to signify that the pictures are like reflections in a mirror;

again from the Upanishad - as in the mirror, so in the world of *manes*, as in the water, so in the world of Gandharvas; as shadow and sunlight in Brahma Loka.

D.: There is spiritual awakening since 1930 all the world over? Does Maharshi agree?

Maharshi said: "The development is according to *your* sight."

The Baron again asked if Maharshi would induce a spiritual trance and give him a message - which is unspoken but still understandable.

No answer was made.

25th December, 1935

Talk 115.

Mr. M. Frydman: Even without any initial desires there are some strange experiences for us. Wherefrom do they arise?

M.: The desire may not be there now. Enough if it was there before. Though forgotten by you now it is bearing fruit in due course. That is how the *jnani* is said to have *prarabdha* left for him. Of course it is only according to others' point of view.

Talk 116.

D.: Jiva is said to be bound by karma. Is it so?

M.: Let karma enjoy its fruits. As long as you are the doer so long are you the enjoyer.

D.: How to get released from karma.

M.: See whose karma it is. You will find you are not the doer. Then you will be free. This requires grace of God for which you should pray to Him, worship Him and meditate on Him.

The karma which takes place without effort, *i.e.*, involuntary action, is not binding.

Even a *jnani* is acting as seen by his bodily movements. There can be no karma without effort or without intentions (*sankalpas*). Therefore there are *sankalpas* for all. They are of two kinds (1) one, binding - *bandha-hetu* and the other (2) *mukti-hetu* - not binding. The former must be given up and the latter must be cultivated.

There is no fruit without previous karma; no karma without previous *sankalpa*. Even *mukti* must be the result of effort so long as the sense of doership persists.

Talk 117.

A Ceylonese: What is the first step for Realisation of Self? Please help me towards it. There is no use reading books.

Another: This one man's request is that of us all.

M.: Quite so. If the Self be found in books it would have been already realised. What wonder can be greater than that we seek the Self in books? Can it be found there?

Of course books have given readers the sense to ask this question and to seek the Self.

D.: Books are utterly useless. They may all be burnt. The spoken word alone is useful. Grace alone is useful.

Others spoke according to their own light, until finally they returned to the original question, but Sri Bhagavan remained silent.

Talk 118.

Mr. Rangachari, a Telugu Pandit in Voorhees' College at Vellore, asked about *nishkama karma*. There was no reply. After a time Sri Bhagavan went up the hill and a few followed him, including the pandit. There was a thorny stick lying on the way which Sri Bhagavan picked up; he sat down and began leisurely to work at it. The thorns were cut off, the knots were made smooth, the whole stick was polished with a rough leaf. The whole operation took about six hours. Everyone was wondering at the fine appearance of the stick made of a spiky material. A shepherd boy put in his appearance on the way as the group moved off. He had lost his stick and was at a loss. Sri Bhagavan immediately gave the new one in his hand to the boy and passed on.

The pandit said that this was the matter-of-fact answer to his question.

Talk 119.

Again at the same time there were four dogs in the Asramam. Sri Bhagavan said that those dogs would not accept any food not partaken

by Himself. The pandit put the matter to the test. He spread some food before them; they would not touch it; then Sri Bhagavan, after a time, put a small morsel of it into His mouth. Immediately they fell to and devoured the food.

Talk 120.

Later a man brought two peacocks with their eyes screened. When let loose in Maharshi's presence they flew away to a distance. They were brought back but still they flew away. Sri Bhagavan then said, "It is no use trying to keep them here. They are not ripe in their minds as these dogs." However much they tried to keep the peacocks they would not remain there even a minute.

Talk 121.

Talks between the Master and two Moslems on a previous occasion.

D.: Has God a form?

M.: Who says so?

D.: Well, if God has no form is it proper to worship idols?

M.: Leave God alone because He is unknown. What about you? Have you a form?

D.: Yes. I am this and so and so.

M.: So then, you are a man with limbs, about three and a half cubits high, with beard, etc. Is it so?

D.: Certainly.

M.: Then do you find yourself so in deep sleep?

D.: After waking I perceive that I was asleep. Therefore by inference I remained thus in deep sleep also.

M.: If you are the body why do they bury the corpse after death? The body must refuse to be buried.

D.: No, I am the subtle *jiva* within the gross body.

M.: So you see that you are really formless; but you are at present identifying yourself with the body. So long as you are formful why should you not worship the formless God as being formful?

The questioner was baffled and perplexed.

1st January, 1936

Talk 122.

A crowd had gathered here during Christmas.

D.: How to attain Unity Consciousness?

M.: Being Unity Consciousness how to attain it? Your question is its own answer.

D.: What is *Atman* (Self), *anatman* (non-self) and *paramatman* (Supreme Self)?

M.: Atman is *jivatman* (the individual Self) and the rest are plain. The Self is ever-present (*nityasiddha*). Each one wants to know the Self. What kind of help does one require to know oneself? People want to see the Self as something new. But it is eternal and remains the same all along. They desire to see it as a blazing light, etc. How can it be so? It is not light, not darkness (*na tejo, na tamah*). It is only as it is. It cannot be defined. The best definition is 'I am that I AM.' The *Srutis* speak of the Self as being the size of one's thumb, the tip of the hair, an electric spark, vast, subtler than the subtlest, etc. They have no foundation in fact. It is only Being, but different from the real and the unreal; it is Knowledge, but different from knowledge and ignorance. How can it be defined at all? It is simply Being.

Again Sri Bhagavan said that in the whole Thayumanavar literature, he preferred one stanza which says: "Ego disappearing another 'I-I' spontaneously manifests in full glory," etc. Again he cites *Skandar Anubhuti:* "Not real, nor unreal; not darkness nor light, it is."

One man said, that a *siddha* of Kumbakonam claimed to overcome the defects in Sri Sankara's system which deals only with transcendentalism and not the work-a-day life. One must be able to exercise super-human powers in ordinary life, that is to say, one must be a *siddha* in order to be perfect.

Sri Bhagavan pointed out a stanza in Thayumanavar which condemns all *siddhis*. Further he said that Thayumanavar mentions *mouna* (silence) in numerous places but defines it in only one

verse. *Mouna* is said to be that state which spontaneously manifests after the annihilation of the ego. That state is beyond light and darkness, but still it is called light since no other proper word could be found for it.

3rd January, 1936

Talk 123.

Dr. Mohammed Hafiz Syed, a Muslim Professor of Persian and Urdu in the University of Allahabad, asked: " What is the purpose of this external manifestation?"

M.: This manifestation had induced your question.

D.: True. I am covered by *maya*. How to be free from it?

M.: Who is covered by *maya*? Who wants to be free?

D.: Master, being asked 'Who?', I know that it is ignorant me, composed of the senses, mind and body. I tried this enquiry 'Who?' after reading Paul Brunton's book. Three or four times I was feeling elated and the elation lasted sometime and faded away. How to be established in 'I'? Please give me the clue and help me.

M.: That which appears anew must also disappear in due course.

D.: Please tell me the method of reaching the eternal Truth.

M.: You are *That*. Can you ever remain apart from the Self? To be yourself requires no effort since you are always That.

Talk 124.

Another impatient questioner elaborated long premises and finished asking why some children die a premature death. He required the answer not to satisfy the grown-up ones who look on, but the babies who are the victims.

M.: Let the victims ask. Why do you ask and desire the answer from the standpoint of the child?

Talk 125.

The Muslim Professor asked: When I am here my mind is *satvic*; as soon as I turn my back on this, my mind hankers after so many objects.

M.: Are the objects different from you? There can be no objects without the subject.

D.: And how shall I know it?

M.: Being That, what do you want to know? Are there two selves for the one to know the other?

D.: Again, I repeat, sir, how to know the truth of all this and experience the same?

M.: There is no gaining of anything new. All that is required is to rid the Self of ignorance. This ignorance is the identification of the Self with the non-Self.

D.: Yes. Still I do not understand. I must have your help. Everyone here is waiting on you for your Grace. You yourself must have sought originally the help of a Guru or of God. Extend that Grace to others now and save me.

Before I came here I desired to see you very much. But somehow I could not find an opportunity to do so. In Bangalore I made up my mind to return to my place. I met Mr. Frydman and others who sent me here. You have dragged me here. My case is like Paul Brunton's in Bombay, when he was dragged here having cancelled his passage home.

I hesitated at first on arrival. I wondered if I would be permitted to approach you and converse with you. My doubts were soon set at rest. I find that all are equal here. You have established an equality among all. I dined with you and others. If I should say so to my people in U.P., they would not believe it. The Brahmins would not drink water with me, nor chew *pan* with me. But here you have taken me and others like me in your fold. Though Gandhi is striving hard he cannot bring about such a state of affairs in the country. I am very happy in your presence.

I regard you as God. I consider Sri Krishna to be true God because He has said, "Whomsoever one may worship, the worshipper worships me only and I save him." Whereas all others have said, "Salvation is through me (meaning himself) only," Krishna alone is so broad-minded and has spoken like God. You observe the same kind of equality.

4th January, 1936

Talk 126.

Dr. Syed again asked: "Should anyone desirous of spiritual progress take to action or renunciation (*pravritti-marga* or *nivritti-marga*)?"

M.: Do you go out of the Self? What is meant by giving up?

An American Engineer asked about *sat-sanga* (association with sages).

M.: Sat is within us.

D.: In the book "*Who am I*?" you have said the Heart is the seat of the mind. Is it so?

M.: The mind is Atman.

D.: Is it Atman itself or its projection?

M.: The same.

D.: The Westerners look on the mind as the highest principle, whereas the Easterners think the contrary - why?

M.: Where psychology ends, there philosophy begins. This is experience; the mind is born; we see it; even without the mind we exist. There is everyone's experience to prove it.

D.: In deep sleep I do not seem to exist.

M.: You say so when awake. It is the mind which speaks now. You exist in deep sleep beyond mind.

D.: Western philosophy admits the Higher Self as influencing the mind.

Talk 127.

The American Engineer asked: "Does distance have any effect upon Grace?"

M.: Time and space are within us. You are always in your Self. How do time and space affect it?

D.: In radio those who are nearer hear sooner. You are Hindu, we are American. Does it make any difference?

M.: No.

D.: Even thoughts are read by others.

M.: That shows that all are one.

5th January, 1936

Talk 128.

There were some French ladies and gentlemen and American as visitors to the Asramam. They asked Sri Bhagavan several questions. Among them, one was: "What is the message of the East to the West?"

M.: All go to the same goal.

To another question Sri Bhagavan said: "How do you say 'I am'? Do you take a light to find yourself? Or did you come to know it on reading books? How?"

The questioner said: "By experience."

M.: Yes. Experience is the word. Knowledge implies subject and object. But experience is non-terminal, eternal.

6th January, 1936

Talk 129.

An elderly gentleman, formerly a co-worker with B. V. Narasimha Swami and author of some *Visishtadvaita* work, visited the place for the first time. He asked about rebirths, if it is possible for the *linga sarira* (subtle body) to get dissolved and be reborn in two years after death.

M.: Yes. Surely. Not only can one be reborn, one may be twenty or forty or even seventy years old in the new body though only two years after death. Sri Bhagavan cited Lila's story from *Yoga Vasishta*.

Sreyo hi jnanam abhyasat jnanat dhyanam,

dhyanat karmaphala tyagah.

Here *jnana* stands for knowledge without practice; *abhyasa* stands for practice without knowledge; *dhyana* stands for practice with knowledge.

"Knowledge without practice accompanying it is superior to practice without knowledge. Practice with knowledge is superior to knowledge without practice accompanying it. *Karmaphala tyagah Nishkama karma* as of a *jnani* - action without desire - is superior to knowledge with practice."

D.: What is the difference between *yoga* and surrender?

M.: Surrender is *Bhakti Yoga*. To reach the source of the 'I-thought' is the destruction of the ego, is the attainment of the goal, is *prapatti* (surrender), *jnana*, etc.

Talk 130.

Lakshman Brahmachari from Sri Ramakrishna Mission asked: Enquiry of 'Who am I?' or of the 'I-thought' being itself a thought, how can it be destroyed in the process?

M.: When Sita was asked who was her husband among the *rishis* (Rama himself being present there as a *rishi*) in the forest by the wives of the *rishis*, she denied each one as he was pointed out to her, but simply hung down her head when Rama was pointed out. Her silence was eloquent.

Similarly, the Vedas also are eloquent in '*neti*' - '*neti*' (not this - not this) and then remain silent. Their silence is the Real State. This is the meaning of exposition by silence. When the source of the 'I-thought' is reached it vanishes and what remains over is the Self.

D.: Patanjali Yoga Sutras speak of identification.

M.: Identification with the Supreme is only the other name for the destruction of the ego.

Talk 131.

Mr. Subba Rao asked: What is *mukhya prana* (the chief *prana*)?

M.: It is that from which the ego and the *prana* rise. It is sometimes called *Kundalini*. Consciousness is not born at any time, it remains eternal. But ego is born; so also the other thoughts. Associated with the absolute consciousness they shine forth; not otherwise.

D.: What is *moksha* (liberation)?

M.: Moksha is to know that you were not born. "*Be still and know that I am God*."

To be still is not to think. Know, and not *think*, is the word.

D.: There are said to be six organs of different colours in the chest, of which the heart is said to be two finger-breadths to the right of the

middle line. But the Heart is also formless. Should we then imagine it to have a shape and meditate on it?

M.: No. Only the quest "Who am I?" is necessary. What remains all through deep sleep and waking is the same. But in waking there is unhappiness and the effort to remove it. Asked who wakes up from sleep you say 'I'. Now you are told to hold fast to this 'I'. If it is done the eternal Being will reveal Itself. Investigation of 'I' is the point and not meditation on the heart-centre. There is nothing like within or without. Both mean either the same thing or nothing.

Of course there is also the practice of meditation on the heart-centre. It is only a practice and not investigation. Only the one who meditates on the heart can remain aware when the mind ceases to be active and remains still; whereas those who meditate on other centres cannot be so aware but infer that the mind was still only after it becomes again active.

Talk 132.

An educated man asked: Is there an Absolute Being? What is its relation to the relative existence?

M.: Are they different from each other? All the questions arise only in the mind. The mind arises with waking and subsides in deep sleep. As long as there is a mind, so long will there be such questions and doubts.

D.: There must be stage after stage of progress for gaining the Absolute. Are there grades of Reality?

M.: There are no grades of Reality. There are grades of experience for the *jiva* and not of Reality. If anything can be gained anew, it could also be lost, whereas the Absolute is central - here and now.

D.: If so, how do I remain ignorant of it (*avarana*)?

M.: For whom is this ignorance (veiling)? Does the Absolute tell you that it is veiled? It is the *jiva* who says that something veils the Absolute. Find out for whom this ignorance is.

D.: Why is there imperfection in Perfection? That is, how did the Absolute become relative?

M.: For whom is this relativity? For whom is this imperfection? The Absolute is not imperfect and cannot ask. The insentient cannot ask the question. Between the two something has risen up which raises these questions and which feels this doubt. Who is it? Is it the one who has now arisen? Or is it the one who is eternal?

Being perfect, why do you feel yourself imperfect? Such is the teaching of all the religions. Whatever may be the experiences, the experiencer is one and the same.

'I' is *purna* - perfection. There is no diversity in sleep. That indicates perfection.

D.: Being perfect, why do I not feel it?

M.: Nor is imperfection felt in deep sleep. The 'I' in sleep being perfect, why does the waking 'I' feel imperfect? Because the one who feels imperfect is a spurious offshoot, a differentiation from the Infinite - a segregation from God.

D.: I am the same in all the three states. Did this ego submerge me or did I entangle myself into it?

M.: Did anything come up without you?

D.: I am always the same.

M.: Because you see it, this appears to have come up. Did you feel this difficulty in deep sleep? What is new now?

D.: The senses and the mind.

M.: Who says this? Is it the sleeper? If so he should have raised the question in deep sleep also. The sleeper has been lost hold of, some spurious offshoot has differentiated himself and speaks now.

Can anything new appear without that which is eternal and perfect? This kind of dispute is itself eternal. Do not engage in it. Turn inward and put an end to all this. There will be no finality in disputations.

D.: Show me that Grace which puts an end to all this trouble. I have not come here to argue. I want only to learn.

M.: Learn first what you are. This requires no *sastras*, no scholarship. This is simple experience. The state of *being* is now and here all along. You have lost hold of yourself and are asking others for

guidance. The purpose of philosophy is to turn you inward. "If you know your Self, no evil can come to you. Since you asked me I have taught you."

The ego comes up only holding you (the Self). Hold yourself and the ego will vanish. Until then the sage will be saying, "There is." - The ignorant will be asking "Where?"

D.: The crux of the problem lies in "Know Thyself."

M.: Yes. Quite so.

Talk 133.

There are two schools in *Advaita*: (1) *Drishti srishti* (simultaneous creation) and (2) *Srishti drishti* (gradual creation).

There is the *Tantric Advaita* which admits three fundamentals *jagat, jiva, Isvara* - world, soul, God. These three are also real. But the reality does not end with them. It extends beyond. That is the *Tantric Advaita*. The Reality is limitless. The three fundamentals do not exist apart from the Absolute Reality. All agree that Reality is all-pervading; thus *Isvara* pervades the *jiva*; therefore the *jiva* has eternal being. His knowledge is not limited. Limited knowledge is only imagined by him. In truth, his is infinite knowledge. Its limit is Silence. This truth was revealed by *Dakshinamurti*. For those who still perceive these three fundamentals they are said to be realities. They are concomitant with the ego.

True, the images of gods are described in great detail. Such description points only to the final Reality. Otherwise why is the special significance of each detail also given? Think. The image is only a symbol. Only that which lies beyond name and form is Reality. *Saiva Siddhanta* and *Vedanta* have the common aim of the same Truth. Otherwise how could Sri Sankaracharya, the greatest exponent of *Advaita*, sing praises of gods? Obviously he did so knowingly.

The questioner earnestly explained that his faith in *Saiva Siddhanta, Vedanta*, etc., was shaken after reading Bahaic literature. "Please save me," he said.

M.: Know the Self which is here and now; you will be steady and not waver.

D.: The Bahaists read others' minds.

M.: Yes. That is possible. Your thoughts were read by another. There must be one to know your mind. That is the Truth always present which is to be realised. Truth does not waver.

D.: Show me Grace.

M.: Grace always *is*, and is *not given*. Why do you consider the pros and cons of Bahaullah or others being incarnations or otherwise? Know Thyself. Regard everything as Truth. Regard him also as the Truth. Can he exist besides Truth? Your beliefs may change but not Truth.

D.: Show me the truth of *Siddhanta*, etc.

M.: Follow their instructions and then if you have doubts you may ask. Adherence to those instructions will take you only to *mouna*. Differences are perceived in external objects only. If you follow their instructions all differences will be lost. No one but the son of a king can be called a prince; so also only That which is perfect is called Perfection.

One should not be content with mere discipleship, initiation, ceremony of surrender, etc.; these are external phenomena. Never forget the Truth underlying all phenomena.

D.: What is the significance of the Silence of *Dakshinamurti*?

M.: Many are the explanations given by scholars and sages. Have it any way you please.

14th January, 1936

Talk 134.

A question about the Heart was raised.

Sri Bhagavan said that one should seek the Self and realise it. The Heart will play its part automatically. The seat of realisation is the Heart. It cannot be said to be either in or out.

D.: Did Bhagavan feel the Heart as the point of Realisation in his first or early experience?

M.: I began to use the word after seeing literature on the subject. I correlated it with my experience.

15th January, 1936

Talk 135.

Three European ladies from the Theosophical Conference came here and asked: "Is the whole scheme, the Plan, really good? Or is it in the nature of an error, a mistake of which we have to make the best?"

M.: The Plan is indeed good. The error is on our part. When we correct it in ourselves the whole scheme becomes all right.

D.: Have you any formula to teach us how to bring it about through a remembrance of what we do during sleep?

M.: No formula is needed. Everyone has the experience that he slept happily and knew nothing then. Nothing else was experienced.

D.: The answer does not satisfy me. We wander in the astral plane in our sleep but we do not remember it.

M.: The astral plane is concerned with dreams, not with deep sleep.

D.: What do you consider to be the cause of world suffering? And how can we help to change it, (*a*) as individuals? or (*b*) collectively?

M.: Realise the Real Self. It is all that is necessary.

D.: Can we hasten our illumination for greater service? and how?

M.: As we are not able to help ourselves, so we have to surrender ourselves to the Supreme completely. Then He will take care of us as well as the world.

D.: What do you consider the goal?

M.: Self-Realisation.

D.: Is there any way to meet the appointed Guru for each?

M.: Intense meditation brings it about.

Talk 136.

Dr. G. H. Mees, a young Dutchman, was here for a few days. He asked Sri Bhagavan: "I have an impression that in deep sleep I have something akin to *samadhi*. Is it so?"

M.: It is the waking 'I' that asks the questions - not the 'I' in sleep. If you attain the state of wakeful sleep which is the same as *samadhi*, while still awake, doubts will not arise.

Samadhi is one's natural state. It is the under-current in all the three states. This - that is, 'I' - is not in those states, but these states are in It. If we get *samadhi* in our waking state that will persist in deep sleep also. The distinction between consciousness and unconsciousness belongs to the realm of mind, which is transcended by the state of the Real Self.

D.: Is the Buddhist view, that there is no continuous entity answering to the ideas of the individual soul, correct or not? Is this consistent with the Hindu notion of a reincarnating ego? Is the soul a continuous entity which reincarnates again and again, according to the Hindu doctrine, or is it a mere mass of mental tendencies - *samskaras*?

M.: The Real Self is continuous and unaffected. The reincarnating ego belongs to the lower plane, namely, thought. It is transcended by Self-Realisation.

Reincarnations are due to a spurious offshoot. Therefore it is denied by the Buddhists. The present state is due to a mixing up of the *chit* (sentient) with *jada* (insentient).

Talk 137.

Lakshman Brahmachari of Sri Ramakrishna Mission asked: "Can one imagine oneself as witness of the thoughts?"

M.: It is not the natural state. It is only an idea (*bhavana*) - an aid to stilling the mind. The Self is ever the witness, whether so imagined or not. There is no need to so imagine except for that purpose. But it is best to remain as one's Self.

Talk 138.

The Financial Secretary of Mysore asked: "Is Paul Brunton's *Secret Path* useful for Indians as well?"

M.: Yes - for all.

D.: The body, the senses, etc. are not 'I'. This is common amongst us. But how to practise it?

M.: By the threefold method mentioned therein.

D.: Is breath-control necessary for enquiry?

M.: Not quite.

D.: "There is a blankness intervening," it is said in the book.

M.: Yes. Do not stop there. See for whom the blankness appears.

D.: For devotees there is no blankness, it is said.

M.: Even there, there is the latent state, *laya*; the mind wakes up after some time.

D.: What is the experience of *samadhi*?

M.: It is as it is. For onlookers it may seem to be a swoon. Even to the practiser it may appear so in the early experiences. After a few repeated experiences it will be all right.

D.: Do they soothe *nadis* or do they excite them by such experiences?

M.: They are excited at first. By continued experience it becomes common and the man is no longer excited.

D.: Proceeding on safe lines there should be no unpleasantness. Excitement is uncongenial to smooth being and working.

M.: A wandering mind is on the wrong way; only a devotional mind is on the right way.

19th January, 1936

Talk 139.

Mr. Ellappa Chettiar, a Member of the Legislative Council, from Salem, asked: "Is it enough to introvert the mind or should we meditate on 'I am Brahman'?"

M.: To introvert the mind is the prime thing. The Buddhists consider the flow of 'I' thought to be Liberation; whereas we say that such flow proceeds from its underlying substratum - the only - Reality.

Why should one be meditating 'I am Brahman'? Only the annihilation of 'I' is Liberation. But it can be gained only by keeping the 'I-I' always in view. So the need for the investigation of the 'I' thought. If the 'I' is not let go, no blank can result to the seeker. Otherwise meditation will end in sleep.

There is only one 'I' all along, but what arises up from time to time is the mistaken 'I-thought'; whereas the intuitive 'I' always remains Self-shining, *i.e.*, even before it becomes manifest.

The birth of the gross body does not amount to one's own birth, on the other hand, the birth of the ego is one's own birth.

For liberation, nothing new remains to be gained. It is the original state and continues unchanged too.

Talk 140.

D.: What is reality?

M.: Reality must be always real. It is not with forms and names. That which underlies these is the Reality. It underlies limitations, being itself limitless. It is not bound. It underlies unrealities, itself being real. Reality is that which is. It is as it is. It transcends speech, beyond the expressions, *e.g*., existence, non-existence, etc.

Talk 141.

The same gentleman later, after quoting a verse from *Kaivalya*, asked: "Can *jnana* be lost after being once attained?"

M.: Jnana, once revealed, takes time to steady itself. The Self is certainly within the direct experience of everyone, but not as one imagines it to be. It is only as it is. This Experience is *samadhi*. Just as fire remains without scorching against incantations or other devices but scorches otherwise, so also the Self remains veiled by *vasanas* and reveals itself when there are no *vasanas*. Owing to the fluctuation of the *vasanas, jnana* takes time to steady itself. Unsteady *jnana* is not enough to check rebirths. *Jnana* cannot remain unshaken side by side with *vasanas*. True, that in the proximity of a great master, the *vasanas* will cease to be active, the mind becomes still and *samadhi* results, similar to fire not scorching because of other devices. Thus the disciple gains true knowledge and right experience in the presence of the master. To remain unshaken in it further efforts are necessary. He will know it to be his real Being and thus be liberated even while alive. *Samadhi* with closed eyes is certainly good, but one must go further until it is realised that actionlessness and action are not hostile to each other. Fear of loss of *samadhi* while one is active is the sign of ignorance. *Samadhi* must be the natural life of everyone.

There is a state beyond our efforts or effortlessness. Until it is realised effort is necessary. After tasting such Bliss, even once one

will repeatedly try to regain it. Having once experienced the Bliss of Peace no one would like to be out of it or engaged himself otherwise. It is as difficult for a *jnani* to engage in thoughts as it is for an *ajnani* to be free from thought.

The common man says that he does not know himself; he thinks many thoughts and cannot remain without thinking.

Any kind of activity does not affect a *jnani*; his mind remains ever in eternal Peace.

20th January, 1936

Talk 142.

Mr. Prakasa Rao from Bezwada: Does not illusion become inoperative even before identity with Brahman results (*Brahmakaravritti*)? Or does it persist even afterwards?

M.: Illusion will not persist after *vasanas* are annihilated. In the interval between the knowledge of the identity and annihilation of *vasanas*, there will be illusion.

D.: How can the world influence a man even after identity with Brahman?

M.: First do it and see. You can then raise this question, if necessary.

D.: Can we know it in the same way as we know our identity?

M.: Are you different from the mind? How do you expect it to be known?

D.: Can the full scope of the *Chitta* (*Chittavilasa*) be known?

M.: Oh! Is this the identity of Brahman?

Ignorance vanishing, the residue reveals itself. It is experience, not in the category of knowledge.

23rd January, 1936

Talk 143.

Mr. P. Brunton asked Sri Bhagavan if the Hill here is hollow.

M.: The *puranas* say so. When it is said that the Heart is a cavity, penetration into it proves it to be an expanse of light. Similarly the Hill is one of light. The caves, etc., are covered up by the Light.

D.: Are there caves inside?

M.: In visions I have seen caves, cities with streets, etc., and a whole world in it.

D.: Are there *Siddhas* too in it?

M.: All the *Siddhas* are reputed to be there.

D.: Are there only *Siddhas* or others also?

M.: Just like this world.

D.: Siddhas are said to be in the Himalayas.

M.: Kailas is on the Himalayas: it is the abode of Siva. Whereas this Hill is Siva Himself. All the paraphernalia of His abode must also be where He Himself is.

D.: Does Bhagavan believe that the Hill is hollow, etc.?

M.: Everything depends on the viewpoint of the individual. You yourself have seen hermitages, etc., on this Hill in a vision. You have described such in your book.

D.: Yes. It was on the surface of the Hill. The vision was within me.

M.: That is exactly so. Everything is within one's Self. To see the world, there must be a spectator. There could be no world without the Self. The Self is all-comprising. In fact Self is all. There is nothing besides the Self.

D.: What is the mystery of this Hill?

M.: Just as you have said in *Secret Egypt*, "The mystery of the pyramid is the mystery of the Self," so also the mystery of this Hill is the mystery of the Self.

Maj. Chadwick: I do not know if the Self is different from the ego.

M.: How were you in your deep sleep?

D.: I do not know.

M.: Who does not know? Is it not the waking Self? Do you deny your existence in your deep sleep?

D.: I was and I am; but I do not know who was in deep sleep.

M.: Exactly. The man awake says that he did not know anything in the state of sleep. Now he sees the objects and knows that he is there; whereas in deep sleep there were no objects, no spectator, etc.

The same one who is now speaking was in deep sleep also. What is the difference between these two states? There are objects and play of senses now which were not in sleep. A new entity, the ego, has risen up in the meantime, it plays through the senses, sees the objects, confounds itself with the body and says that the Self is the ego. In reality, what was in deep sleep continues to exist now too. The Self is changeless. It is the ego that has come between. That which rises and sets is the ego; that which remains changeless is the Self.

Talk 144.

Mr. Prakasa Rao: What is the root-cause of *maya*?

M.: What is *maya*?

D.: Maya is wrong knowledge, illusion.

M.: For whom is the illusion? There must be one to be deluded. Illusion is ignorance. The ignorant Self sees the objects according to you. When the objects are not themselves present how can *maya* exist? *Maya is ya ma* (*maya is what is not*). What remains over is the true Self. If you say that you see the objects, or if you say that you do not know the Real Unity, then are there two selves, one the knower and the other the knowable object. No one will admit of two selves in himself. The awakened man says that he himself was in deep slumber but not aware. He does not say that the sleeper was different from the present one. There is only one Self. That Self is always aware. It is changeless. There is nothing but the Self.

D.: What is the astral body?

M.: Do you not have a body in your dream? Is it not different from the recumbent body on the bed?

D.: Do we survive after death? Does the astral body outlive physical death?

M.: Just as in dreams you wake up after several novel experiences, so also after physical death another body is found and so on.

D.: They say that the astral body lives for forty years after death.

M.: In the present body you say the dream body is astral. Did you say so in the dream body? What is astral now would appear real then, the present body itself is astral according to that viewpoint. What is

the difference between one astral body and another? There is no difference between the two.

Mr. P. Brunton: There are degrees of reality.

M.: To say the dream body is unreal now, and to say that this body was unreal in the dream, does not denote degrees of reality. In deep sleep there is no experience of the body at all. There is always only one and that is the Self.

Talk 145.

Mr. P. Brunton: Why do religions speak of Gods, heaven, hell, etc.?

M.: Only to make the people realise that they are on a par with this world and that the Self alone is real. The religions are according to the view-point of the seeker. Take the *Bhagavad Gita* for instance: When Arjuna said that he would not fight against his own relatives, his elders, etc., in order to kill them and gain the kingdom, Sri Krishna said, "Not that these, you or I, were not before, are not now, nor will not be hereafter. Nothing was born, nothing was dead, nor will it not be so hereafter" and so on. Later as he developed the theme and declared that He had given the same instruction to the Sun, through him to Ikshvaku, etc. Arjuna raised the doubt, "How could it be? You were born a few years ago. They lived ages ago." Then Sri Krishna understanding Arjuna's standpoint, said: "Yes. There have been so many incarnations of myself and yourself, I know them all but you do not know."

Such statements appear contradictory, but still they are correct according to the viewpoint of the questioner. The Christ also declared that He was even before Abraham.

D.: What is the purpose of such descriptions in religions?

M.: Only to establish the Reality of the Self.

D.: Bhagavan always speaks from the highest standpoint.

Sri Bhagavan (with a smile): People would not understand the simple and bare truth - the truth of their every day, ever-present and eternal experience. That Truth is that of the Self. Is there anyone not aware of the Self? They would not even like to hear it (the Self), whereas they are eager to know what lies beyond - heaven, hell,

reincarnation. Because they love mystery and not the bare truth, religions pamper them - only to bring them round to the Self. Wandering hither and thither you must return to the Self only. Then, why not abide in the Self even here and now?

The other worlds require the Self as a spectator or speculator. Their reality is only of the same degrees as that of the spectator or thinker. They cannot exist without the spectator, etc. Therefore they are not different from the Self. Even the ignorant man sees only the Self when he sees objects. But he is confused and identifies the Self with the object, *i.e.*, the body and with the senses and plays in the world. Subject and object - all merge in the Self. There is no seer nor objects seen. The seer and the seen are the Self. There are not many selves either. All are only one Self.

26th January, 1936

Talk 146.

In reply to Miss Leena Sarabhai, a cultured Indian lady of high rank, Sri Bhagavan said: The state of equanimity is the state of bliss. The declaration in the Vedas 'I am This or That', is only an aid to gain equanimity of mind.

D.: So, it is wrong to begin with a goal: is it?

M.: If there be a goal to be reached it cannot be permanent. The goal must already be there. We seek to reach the goal with the ego, but the goal exists before the ego. What is in the goal is even prior to our birth, *i.e.*, to the birth of the ego. Because we exist the ego appears to exist too.

If we look on the Self as the ego then we become the ego, if as the mind we become the mind, if as the body we become the body. It is the thought which builds up sheaths in so many ways. The shadow on the water is found to be shaking. Can anyone stop the shaking of the shadow? If it should cease to shake you would not notice the water but only the light. Similarly to take no notice of the ego and its activities, but see only the light behind. The ego is the I-thought. The true 'I' is the Self.

D.: It is one step to realisation.

M.: Realisation is already there. The state free from thoughts is the only real state. There is no such action as Realisation. Is there anyone who is not realising the Self? Does anyone deny his own existence? Speaking of realisation, it implies two selves - the one to realise, the other to be realised. What is not already realised, is sought to be realised. Once we admit our existence, how is it that we do not know our Self?

D.: Because of the thoughts - the mind.

M.: Quite so. It is the mind that stands between and veils our happiness. How do we know that we exist? If you say because of the world around us, then how do you know that you existed in deep sleep?

D.: How to get rid of the mind?

M.: Is it the mind that wants to kill itself? The mind cannot kill itself. So your business is to find the real nature of the mind. Then you will know that there is no mind. When the Self is sought, the mind is nowhere. Abiding in the Self, one need not worry about the mind.

D.: How to get rid of fear?

M.: What is fear? It is only a thought. If there is anything besides the Self there is reason to fear. Who sees the second (anything external)? First the ego arises and sees objects as external. If the ego does not rise, the Self alone exists and there is no second (nothing external). For anything external to oneself implies the seer within. Seeking it there will arise no doubt, no fear - not only fear, all other thoughts centred round the ego will disappear along with it.

D.: This method seems to be quicker than the usual one of cultivating qualities alleged necessary for salvation (*sadhana chatushtaya*)?

M.: Yes. All bad qualities centre round the ego. When the ego is gone Realisation results by itself. There are neither good nor bad qualities in the Self. The Self is free from all qualities. Qualities pertain to the mind only. It is beyond quality. If there is unity, there will also be duality. The numeral one gives rise to other numbers. The truth is neither one nor two. IT is as it is.

D.: The difficulty is to be in the thought-free state.

M.: Leave the thought-free state to itself. Do not think of it as pertaining to you. Just as when you walk, you involuntarily take steps, so too in your actions; but the thought-free state is not affected by your actions.

D.: What is it that is discriminative in action?

M.: Discrimination will be automatic, intuitive.

D.: So Intuition alone matters; Intuition develops also.

M.: Those who have discovered great Truths have done so in the still depths of the Self.

The ego is like one's shadow thrown on the ground. If one attempts to bury it, it will be foolish. The Self is only one. If limited it is the ego. If unlimited it is Infinite and is the Reality.

The bubbles are different from one another and numerous, but the ocean is only one. Similarly the egos are many, whereas the Self is one and only one.

When told that you are not the ego, realise the Reality. Why do you still identify yourself with the ego? It is like saying, "Don't think of the monkey while taking medicine" - it is impossible. Similarly it happens with common folk. When the Reality is mentioned why do you continue to meditate *Sivoham* or *Aham Brahmasmi*? The significance must be traced and understood. It is not enough to repeat the bare words or think of them.

Reality is simply the loss of the ego. Destroy the ego by seeking its identity. Because the ego is no entity it will automatically vanish and Reality will shine forth by itself. This is the direct method. Whereas all other methods are done, only retaining the ego. In those paths there arise so many doubts and the eternal question remains to be tackled finally. But in this method the final question is the only one and it is raised from the very beginning. No *sadhanas* are necessary for engaging in this quest.

There is no greater mystery than this - *viz*., ourselves being the Reality we seek to gain reality. We think that there is something hiding our Reality and that it must be destroyed before the Reality is gained. It is ridiculous. A day will dawn when you will yourself laugh at your past efforts. That which will be on the day you laugh is also here and now.

D.: So it is a great game of pretending?

M.: Yes.

In *Yoga Vasishtha* it is said, "What is Real is hidden from us, but what is false, is revealed as true." We are actually experiencing the Reality only; still, we do not know it. Is it not a wonder of wonders?

The quest "Who am I?" is the axe with which to cut off the ego.

Talk 147.

In answer to a Canarese Sanyasi, Sri Bhagavan said: There are different grades of mind. Realisation is of Perfection. It cannot be comprehended by the mind. *Sarvajnatva* (the state of all-knowing) is to be *sarvam* (the all); 'the all' pertains only to the mind. The known and unknown together form 'the all'. After transcending the mind you remain as the Self. The present knowledge is only of limitation. That Knowledge is unlimited. Being so it cannot be comprehended by this knowledge. Cease to be a knower, then there is perfection.

27th January, 1936

Talk 148.

A Gujerati gentleman said that he was concentrating on sound - *nada* - and desired to know if the method was right.

M.: Meditation on *nada* is one of the several approved methods. The adherents claim a very special virtue for the method. According to them it is the easiest and the most direct method. Just as a child is lulled to sleep by lullabies, so *nada* soothes one to the state of *samadhi*; again just as a king sends his state musicians to welcome his son on his return from a long journey, so also *nada* takes the devotee into the Lord's Abode in a pleasing manner. *Nada* helps concentration. After it is felt the practice should not be made an end in itself. *Nada* is not the objective; the subject should firmly be held; otherwise a blank will result. Though the subject is there even in the blank he would not be aware of the cessation of *nada* of different kinds. In order to be aware even in that blank one must remember his own self. *Nada upasana* (meditation on sound) is good; it is better if associated

with investigation (*vichara*). In that case the *nada* is made up of *chinmaya* and also *tanmaya* (of Knowledge and of Self). *Nada* helps concentration.

28th January, 1936

Talk 149.

In reply to a *sadhu* who asked if *bhakti* consisted in forgetting the body, etc. Sri Bhagavan said:

"What do you care for the body? Practise *bhakti* and don't worry about what happens to the body."

Talk 150.

Mrs. and Mr. Kelly, an elderly couple from America, and others of their company desired to know what they should do to gain concentration in face of discomforts of sitting and the sting of mosquitoes, etc.

M.: The discomforts will not worry you if your concentration is right. Do not mind the discomforts. Keep your mind steady in meditation. If you have not the strength and endurance to bear mosquito stings how do you hope to gain realisation of the Self? Realisation must be amidst all the turmoils of life. If you make yourself comfortable and go to bed you fall asleep. Face the troubles but keep yourself steady in meditation.

31st January, 1936

Talk 151.

The American gentleman is a little hard of hearing. Being accustomed to be self-reliant from his youth he naturally feels worried on account of his hearing becoming defective.

M.: You were not self-reliant; you were ego-reliant. It is good that ego-reliance is banished and that you become truly Self-reliant.

Again Bhagavan said:

"There is no cause for worry. Subjugation of senses is a necessary preliminary for Self-Realisation. One sense is subdued for you by God Himself. So much the better."

The questioner said that he appreciated the humour, but that still his self-respect suffered.

M.: The Self is only one. Do you feel hurt if you blame yourself or scorn yourself for your errors? If you hold the Self there is no second person to scorn you. When you see the world you have lost hold of the Self. On the contrary, hold the Self and the world will not appear.

1st February, 1936

Talk 152.

Mrs. Kelly desired to know how she should best learn to meditate.

Sri Bhagavan asked if she had made *japa* (rolling beads as Roman Catholics do). She said: "No".

M.: Have you thought of God, His qualities, etc.?

D.: I have read, talked, etc. about such themes.

M.: Well, if the same be revolved in the mind without open expression through the senses it is meditation.

D.: I mean meditation as signified in *The Secret Path* and *Who am I*?

M.: Long for it intensely so that the mind melts in devotion. After the camphor burns away no residue is left. The mind is the camphor; when it has resolved itself into the Self without leaving even the slightest trace behind, it is Realisation of the Self.

4th February, 1936

Talk 153.

Some Peshawaris, among them a Judicial Commissioner and a young man well-read and earnest, with a strong belief in the existence of *Paramatman* (Supreme Self) as different from the *Jivatman* (individual self), raised some questions.

Sri Bhagavan clinched his various doubts by this one statement: Remove the *upadhis* (adjuncts), *jiva* and *parama*, from the Atman and say if you still find the difference. If later these doubts still persist ask yourself, "Who is the doubter? Who is the thinker?" Find him. These doubts will vanish.

5th February, 1936

Talk 154.

The next day he asked about *pranayama*.

M.: Pranayama according to *jnana* is:

"Na aham" I am not this = out-breathing

"Koham" Who am I? = in-breathing

"Soham" I am He = Retention of breath

This is *vichara*. This *vichara* brings about the desired result.

For one not so advanced as to engage in it, some meditation brings about suspension of breath and the mind ceases to be restless. Control of mind spontaneously effects control of breath; rather *kevala kumbhaka* (spontaneous retention of breath, without attention to inhalation or exhalation) results.

For one unable to do this also, regulation of breath is prescribed for making the mind quiescent. Quiescence lasts only so long as the breath is controlled. So it is transient. The goal is clearly not *pranayama*. It extends on to *pratyahara, dharana, dhyana* and *samadhi*. Those stages deal with the control of mind. Such control becomes easier for the man who had earlier practised *pranayama*. *Pranayama* leads him to the higher stages involving control of mind. Therefore control of mind is the aim of yoga also.

A more advanced man will naturally go direct to control of mind without wasting his time in practising control of breath. A simple development of *pranayama* alone may confer *siddhis* which so many hanker for.

When asked if there are any food restrictions, Sri Bhagavan said: "*Mita hita bhuk*" - agreeable food in moderate quantity. When asked about the efficacy of *bhakti*, Sri Bhagavan said: So long as there is *vibhakti*, there must be *bhakti*. So long as there is *viyoga*, there must be *yoga*. So long as there is duality, there must be God and devotee. Similarly also in *vichara*. So long as there is *vichara*, there is duality too. But merging into the Source there is unity only. So it is with *bhakti* too. Realising the God of devotion, there will be unity only. God too is thought of in and by the Self. So God is identical with the Self. If one is

told to have *bhakti* for God and he does so straightaway, it is all right. But there is another kind of man who turns round and says: "There are two, I and God. Before knowing the far-off God, let me know the more immediate and intimate 'I'." For him the *vichara-marga* has to be taught. There is in fact no difference between *bhakti* and *vichara*.

Talk 155.

The same man again asked about the nature of *samadhi* and the means to get *samadhi*.

M.: When the one who asks the nature of *samadhi* and the method of getting into it vanishes, *samadhi* will result.

Maj. Chadwick: It is said that one look of a Mahatma is enough; that idols, pilgrimages, etc. are not so effective. I have been here for three months, but I do not know how I have been benefited by the look of Maharshi.

M.: The look has a purifying effect. Purification cannot be visualised. Just as a piece of coal takes long to be ignited, a piece of charcoal takes a short time, and a mass of gunpowder is instantaneously ignited, so it is with grades of men coming in contact with Mahatmas.

Mr. Cohen: I get into meditation and reach a point which may be called peace and a contemplative mood. What should be the next step?

M.: Peace is Self-Realisation. Peace need not be disturbed. One should aim at Peace only.

D.: But I do not have the satisfaction.

M.: Because your peace is temporary. If made permanent it is called Realisation.

9th February, 1936

Talk 156.

D.: Is solitude helpful for practice?

M.: What do you mean by solitude?

D.: To keep away from others.

M.: Why should it be done? It is actuated only by fear. Even in solitude there is the fear of intrusion by others and of solitude

being spoilt. Moreover, how are thoughts to be erased in solitude? Should it not be done in the present environment?

D.: But the mind is distracted now.

M.: Why do you let go the mind? Solitude amounts to making the mind still. This can be done in a crowd too. Solitude cannot efface one's thoughts. Practice does it. The same practice can be made here too.

Talk 157.

D.: In the quest of I, the seeker is at a certain stage directed to keep the mind in a negative attitude for Grace to enter. How can a negative yield positive result?

M.: The Self is always there - not to be newly got.

D.: I mean to ask, what has been done in the negative attitude to deserve the Grace?

M.: Are you asking this question without Grace? Grace is in the beginning, middle and end. Grace is the Self. Because of the false identification of the Self with the body the Guru is considered to be with body. But from the Guru's outlook the Guru is only the Self. The Self is one only. He tells that the Self alone is. Is not then the Self your Guru? Where else will Grace come from? It is from the Self alone. Manifestation of the Self is a manifestation of Grace and vice versa. All these doubts arise because of the wrong outlook and consequent expectation of things external to oneself. Nothing is external to the Self.

D.: All our questions are from our standpoint and Sri Bhagavan's replies are from his standpoint. The questions are not only answered, but are also undermined.

11th February, 1936

Talk 158.

Mr. Frydman: Janaka was a *jnani* and still he ruled his dominions. Does not action require activity of the mind? What is the rationale of the working of a *jnani's* mind?

M.: You say, "Janaka was a *jnani* and yet active, etc." Does Janaka ask the question? The question is in your mind only. The *jnani* is not aware of anything besides the Self. He has no doubts of the kind.

D.: Probably it is like a dream. Just as we speak of our dreams, so they think of their actions.

M.: Even the dream, etc. is in your mind. This explanation too is in your mind only.

D.: Yes. I see. All is *Ramana-Maya* - made up of the Self.

M.: If so, there will be no duality and no talk.

D.: A man, on realising the Self, can help the world more effectively. Is it not so?

M.: If the world be apart from the Self.

12th February, 1936

Talk 159.

Mr. Cohen desired to know if trance is a *sine qua non* for Self-Realisation.

M.: You are always in the Self - now, in trance, in deep sleep, in Realisation. If you lose hold of the Self and identify yourself with the body or the mind, these states appear to overtake you, and it also looks like a blank in trance, etc.; whereas you are the Self and ever-present.

D.: Sri Aurobindo says that the Light which resides in the head must be brought down to the heart below.

M.: Is not the Self already in the Heart? How can the all-pervading Self be taken from one place to another?

D.: Is a karma yogi or a *bhakta* too subject to trance?

M.: When you concentrate on one point you merge in it, and this merging is called trance. The other features disappear and the Self alone remains over. The *karmi* or *bhakta* also must experience the same.

Talk 160.

D.: What is the *hridaya* and what the *sphurana* therein? How do they appear?

M.: The *hridaya* and the *sphurana* are the same as the Self. The *sphurana* requires a basis for its manifestation. This is explained in the book *Vichara Sangraham* (*Self-Enquiry*).

D.: How does the *sphurana* appear - as light, movement, or what?

M.: How can it be described in words? It includes all these - It is the Self. Fix your attention on it and do not let go the idea of its ultimate character.

13th February, 1936

Talk 161.

An elderly man from Ananthapur, after hearing the *Vedas* recited in the hall, stood up and asked:

"It is said that the non-Brahmins should not hear the recital of the Vedas."

M.: Mind your business. Take care of what you came here for. Why do you waste your time in these matters? "I heard the recital," you say. "Who is that 'I'? Without knowing the 'I' you are using the word. If its significance be known there will be no doubt. Find the 'I' first and you may afterwards speak of other matters."

Continuing, Sri Bhagavan said:

"The *smritis* say something. They are not appropriate now. I will reform the world, rewrite the *smritis*." Saying so, people are cutting capers in the world from time immemorial. Such reformers have come and gone; but the ancient *smritis* still stand. Why waste time over such matters? Let each one mind his business. All will be well.

23rd February, 1936

Talk 162.

A Maharashtra lady of middle-age, who had studied *Jnaneswari*, *Bhagavata* and *Vichara Sagara*, and was practising concentration between the eyebrows, had felt shivering and fear, and did not progress. She required guidance.

Maharshi told her not to forget the seer. The sight is fixed between the eyebrows, but the seer is not kept in view. If the seer be always remembered it will be all right.

24th February, 1936

Talk 163.

Dr. Henry Hand, an American of about seventy, asked "What is ego?"

M.: Ego being internal and not external to you it must be clear to yourself.

D.: What is its definition?

M.: The definition also must proceed from the ego. The ego must define itself.

D.: What is soul?

M.: Find the ego, the soul is found.

D.: Are they then the same?

M.: Soul can be without the ego; but the ego cannot be without the soul. They are like bubble and the ocean.

D.: That clarifies the matter. What is *Atman*?

M.: Atman and soul are the same.

Talk 164.

Another American asked about thought-forms.

M.: Trace the source of thoughts, they will disappear.

D.: Thoughts materialise.

M.: If there be thoughts they will materialise. If they disappear there is nothing to materialise. Moreover if you are physical the world is physical and so on. Find out if you are physical.

D.: How shall I be useful to God's world?

M.: Find out if 'I' is different from the divine part of the world. Not being able to help yourself yet you are seeking the divine part of it to help you to help the world. The divinity is directing and controlling you. Where do you go in deep sleep? Wherefrom do you come out?

D.: I have been influenced by deeds and thoughts.

M.: Thoughts and deeds are the same.

D.: Is there any way of sensing super-physical phenomena, *e.g.*, guardian angels?

M.: The state of the object is according to the state of the seer.

D.: A group of seers see the same.

M.: Because there is only one seer behind all, and there is diversity of phenomena. Do you perceive diversity in deep sleep?

D.: We see Abraham Lincoln who died long ago.

M.: Is there the object without the seer? The experiences may be real. The objects are only according to the seer.

D.: An assistant of mine was killed in the war. A photo was taken of another group nine years after his death. His picture appears in the photo. How is it?

M.: Possibly thoughts have materialised ... Go to the root of it.

D.: How?

M.: If the way is external, directions are possible, but it lies within. Seek within. The Self is always realised. Something not already realised might be sought afresh. But the Self is within your experience.

D.: Yes. I realise myself.

M.: Myself. Are there two - *my* and *self*?

D.: I do not mean it.

M.: Who is it that has or has not realised?

D.: There is only one Self.

M.: The question can arise only if there be two. Abandon the wrong identification of the Self with the non-self.

D.: I mean the higher stage of consciousness.

M.: There are no stages.

D.: Why does not a man get illumination instantly.

M.: The man is illumination itself. He is illumining

D.: Is your teaching different from that of others?

M.: The path is one and the realisation is only one.

D.: But people speak of so many methods.

M.: Depending on their own state of mentality.

D.: What is yoga?

M.: Yoga (union) is for one in viyoga (separation). But there is only one. If you realise the Self there will be no difference.

D.: Is there efficacy in bathing in the Ganges?

M.: The Ganges is within you. This Ganges does not make you feel cold or shiver. Bathe in it.

D.: Should we read Gita once in a while?

M.: Always.

D.: May we read the Bible?

M.: The Bible and the Gita are the same.

D.: The Bible teaches that Man is born in sin.

M.: The Man is sin. There was no man-sense in deep sleep. The body-thought brings out the idea of sin. The birth of thought is itself sin.

To another question the Master said: Everyone sees only the Self. The divine forms are only like bubbles in the ocean of Reality, or like pictures moving on a screen.

D.: The Bible says that the human soul may be lost.

M.: The 'I-thought' is the ego and that is lost. The real 'I' is "I am That I Am."

D.: There is conflict in the teachings of Aurobindo and of the Mother.

M.: First surrender the Self and then harmonise the conflicts.

D.: What is Renunciation?

M.: Giving up of the ego.

D.: Is it not giving up possessions?

M.: The possessor too.

D.: The world will change if the people will give up their possessions for the benefit of others.

M.: First give yourself up and then think of the rest.

In answer to another question Sri Bhagavan said:

The methods appear easy according to the nature of the individual. It depends on what he has practised before.

D.: Can we not get realisation instantaneously?

M.: Realisation is nothing new. It is eternal. There is no question of instantaneous or gradual realisation.

D.: Is there reincarnation?

M.: Reincarnation can be if you are incarnate now. Even now you are not born.

To another question:

M.: The ego is the root of all diseases. Give it up.

There will be no disease.

D.: If all renounce will there be a practical world? Who will plough? Who will harvest?

M.: Realise first and then see. The help through Realisation transcends all the help through words, thoughts and deeds, etc. If you understand your own reality then that of the *rishis* and masters will be clear to you. There is only one master and that is the Self.

D.: Why do masters insist on silence and receptivity?

M.: What is silence? It is eternal eloquence.

D.: What is receptive attitude of mind?

M.: Not to be distracted in mind.

D.: Is there use in bringing America and India closer by bringing the intelligentsia of the two countries together, say, by exchange of professors, etc.?

M.: Such events will take place automatically. There is a Power guiding the destinies of nations. These questions arise only when you have lost touch with Reality. Is America apart from you, or India apart? Get hold of it and see.

D.: Sri Ramakrishna prepared Vivekananda. What is the power behind?

M.: The power is only one in all.

D.: What is the nature of that force?

M.: Just like iron filings drawn towards a magnet, the force is inside and not outside. Ramakrishna was in Vivekananda. If you think Vivekananda to be a body, Ramakrishna also is a body. But they are not bodies. Vivekananda could not go into Samadhi had not Ramakrishna been within him.

D.: Why should one suffer when stung by a scorpion?

M.: What is the cause of the appearance of the body and of the world?

D.: It is part of the cosmic mind.

M.: Let the cosmic mind worry about such happenings. If the individual wants to know let him discover his Self.

D.: About yogic mysteries of drinking nitric acid, swallowing poisons, walking on fire, etc., are these due to a state of vibration?

M.: Let the physical body question it. You are not physical. Why worry about what you are not. If the Self had any form it might be affected by objects. But the Self has no form, therefore it is immune from contact with things.

D.: What is the significance of the sea of Love?

M.: Spirit, Holy Ghost, Realisation, Love, etc., are all synonymous.

D.: Very, very illuminating conversation.

Mr. N. Subba Rao: What is *visishtadvaita*?

M.: The same as this.

D.: They do not admit *maya*?

M.: Sarvam is Brahman, we say. They repeat Brahman remains qualified (*visishta*) in all.

D.: They say that the world is a reality.

M.: We say so too. Acharya has only said, "Find out the reality behind the world." What is called illusion by one is called changefulness by another. The end is the same in both.

Dr. Hand: Maharshi! Do not think we are bad boys.

M.: Do not tell me so. But you need not think you are bad boys.

All laughed and dispersed at 5 p.m.

Sri Bhagavan a minute later: If they remain a day longer they will become silent.

Talk 165.

Mr. Subba Rao: Do not men go into *samadhi*?

M.: Is there no *samadhi* now?

D.: Is it eternal?

M.: If not, how can it be real?

D.: Then?

M.: There is no *then*, no *now*.

D.: It appears so.

M.: To whom?

D.: To the mind.

M.: What is mind? Who am I?

D.: (Silence).

Talk 166.

A man asked if it was possible to ward off old age and disease by the intake of divine force.

M.: You can ward off the body itself.

D.: How to take in the divine force?

M.: It is already there. No need to take it in. It can be done only if it is out of you. But it is only you. There is no taking in or giving out.

D.: Is there any necessity to obey physical laws, *i.e.*, dieting?

M.: These are in imagination only.

Talk 167.

A man was worried because he could not succeed in concentrating the mind.

M.: Is it not only One even now? It always remains One only. Diversity lies in your imagination only. Unitary Being need not be acquired.

Talk 168.

It was mentioned to Sri Bhagavan that a Self-realised being needs no food, etc.

M.: You understand according to your state only.

Talk 169.

D.: How to control the mind?

M.: Catch hold of the mind.

D.: How?

M.: What is mind? Find it out. It is only an aggregate of thoughts.

D.: How to root out sexual impulse?

M.: By rooting out the false idea of the body being Self. There is no sex in the Self.

D.: How to realise it?

M.: Because you think you are the body, you see another as the body. Difference in sex arises. But you are not the body. Be the real Self. Then there is no sex.

Talk 170.

D.: Can a yogi know his past lives?

M.: Do you know the present life so well that you wish to know the past. Find out the present life, then the rest will follow. Even with our present limited knowledge we suffer so much. Why do you wish to burden yourself with more knowledge and suffer more?

D.: Can fasting help realisation?

M.: But it is temporary. Mental fast is the real aid. Fasting is not an end in itself. There must be spiritual development side by side. Absolute fasting makes the mind weak too. You cannot derive sufficient strength for the spiritual quest. Therefore take moderate food and go on practising.

D.: They say that after breaking a month's fast, ten days afterwards the mind becomes pure and steady and remains so forever.

M.: Yes, if the spiritual quest has been kept up right through the fast also.

Talk 171.

To another question Master said: The best is heart to heart speech and heart to heart hearing. That is the best *upadesa*.

D.: Is not guidance from Guru necessary?

M.: Are you apart from Guru?

D.: Is proximity helpful?

M.: Do you mean physical proximity? What is the good of it? The mind alone matters. The mind must be contacted.

28th February, 1936

Talk 172.

A visitor: What is the difference between meditation (*dhyana*) and investigation (*vichara*)?

M.: Both amount to the same. Those unfit for investigation must practise meditation. In this practice the aspirant forgetting himself meditates 'I am Brahman' or 'I am Siva'; thus he continues to hold to Brahman or Siva; this will ultimately end on the residual Being as Brahman or Siva which he will realise to be Pure Being, *i.e*. the Self.

He who engages in investigation starts holding on to himself, asks 'Who am I?' and the Self becomes clear to him.

D.: Will the knowledge gained by direct experience be lost afterwards?

M.: Kaivalya Navanita says it may be lost. Experience gained without rooting out all the *vasanas* cannot remain steady. Efforts must be made to eradicate the *vasanas*. Otherwise rebirth after death takes place. Some say direct experience results from hearing from one's master; others say it is from reflection; yet others say from one-pointedness and also from *samadhi*. Though they look different on the surface, ultimately they mean the same. Knowledge can remain unshaken only after all the *vasanas* are rooted out.

29th February, 1936

Talk 173.

D.: Lord, how can the grip of the ego be slackened?

M.: By not adding new *vasanas* to it.

D.: Any amount of *japa* has not slackened the grip!

M.: How so! It will duly slacken and vanish.

2nd March, 1936

Talk 174.

Dr. Hand, the American gentleman, asked: Are there two methods for finding the source of the ego?

M.: There are no two sources and no two methods. There is only one source and only one method.

D.: What is the difference between meditation and enquiry into the Self?

M.: Meditation is possible only if the ego be kept up. There is the ego and the object meditated upon. The method is indirect. Whereas the Self is only one. Seeking the ego, *i.e*., its source, ego disappears. What is left over is the Self. This method is the direct one.

D.: Then what am I to do?

M.: To hold on to the Self.

D.: How?

M.: Even now you are the Self. But you are confounding this consciousness (or ego) with the absolute consciousness. This false identification is due to ignorance. Ignorance disappears along with the ego. Killing the ego is the only thing to accomplish. Realisation is already there. No attempt is needed to attain realisation. For it is nothing external, nothing new. It is always and everywhere here and now too.

3rd March, 1936

Talk 175.

Mr. N. Subba Rao asked: The *Visishtadvatins* say that *Atma Sakshatkara* (Self-Realisation) is preliminary to *Paramatma Sakshatkara* (God-Realisation). The difficulty seems to be considerable.

M.: What is *Atma Sakshatkara*? Are there two Atmas that one realises the other? There are not two selves. First get *Atma Sakshatkara* and then judge what follows.

D.: The Bhagavad Gita says there is God whose body is made up of all the souls.

M.: All are agreed on the annihilation of the ego. Let us get to business on the agreed point. *Nanajivatva* (different individualities) are mentioned by some *Advaitins* also. All that is immaterial to one's spiritual uplift. First realise the Self and then see what lies further.

7th March, 1936

Talk 176.

Dr. Hand intends leaving the Asramam tomorrow, visit the Himalayas (Hardwar), return here, go to Bombay and embark for Egypt, Palestine, Europe and finally to his native land, America.

He wants to go to the peak of the hill and desires Sri Bhagavan to accompany him. Sri Bhagavan might go up as high as is convenient for him and then wait for him to finish the climb - and catch him at an appointed spot on the hill. Sri Bhagavan smiled and asked him if he had heard of the experience of Dr. Beasly.

Dr. Hand: He is my friend. He has told me everything - wonderful! I am older than you, Maharshi. But do not give me up as a back number. I can climb up the hill as a boy would. When did you go to the peak last?

M.: About eleven years before. What did Dr. Beasly say?

D.: It is in strict confidence. I shall tell you everything if you are left alone with me.

Maharshi simply smiled.

D.: Maharshi! Are you conscious of a brotherhood of invisible *rishis*?

M.: If invisible, how to see them?

D.: In consciousness.

M.: There is nothing external in consciousness.

D.: Is there not the individuality? I fear to lose my individual being. Is there not in consciousness the consciousness of being human?

M.: Why fear to lose individuality? What is your state in dreamless sleep? Are you conscious of your individuality then?

D.: It is possible.

M.: But what is your experience? If individuality be there, would it be deep sleep?

D.: That depends on the interpretation. What does Maharshi say?

M.: Maharshi cannot speak for *your experience*. He does not force anything down your throat.

D.: I know. That is why I like Him and His teachings so much.

M.: Do you not really prepare your bed and are you not anxious to lose your individuality in deep sleep? Why fear it?

D.: What is the *nirvana* of Buddha?

M.: Loss of individuality.

D.: I dread that loss. Can there not be human consciousness in *nirvana*?

M.: Are there two selves in that case? Consider your present experience of sleep and say.

D.: I should think it possible to retain individual consciousness in *nirvana*. I fear the loss of individuality.

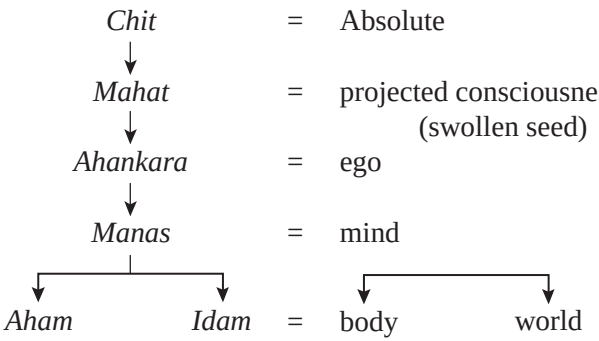
Later, the questioner went up and round the hill and wandered about fifteen miles between twelve noon and eight p.m. He returned tired and gave a very lucid speech on agriculture, social conditions, caste system, spiritual quality of the Indians, etc.

10th March, 1936

Talk 177.

D.: What is *mahat*?

M.: The projected light from Absolute Consciousness. Just as a seed swells up before sprouting and then sprouts and grows, so also the Absolute Consciousness projects light, manifests as the ego and grows up as the body and the universe.



Maj. Chadwick: Is it the same as cosmic consciousness?

M.: Yes, it is so before the birth of the ego and the universe. It comprises them all. Just as all the pictures thrown on the screen are visible by the light projected from a spot, so also the body and the other objects are all visible in that reflected consciousness. It is, therefore, also cosmic consciousness.

Again, (in the microcosm) the body and all other objects are all contained in the brain. The light is projected on the brain. The

impressions in the brain become manifest as the body and the worlds. Because the ego identifies itself with limitations, the body is considered separate and the world separate.

Lying down on your bed in a closed room with eyes closed you dream of London, the crowds there and you among them. A certain body is identified as yourself in the dream. London and the rest could not have entered into the room and into your brain; however, such wide space and duration of time were all perceptible to you. They must have been projected from the brain. Although the world is so big and the brain so small, is it not a matter of wonder that such a big creation is contained in such small compass as one's brain? Though the screen is limited, still all the pictures of the cinema pass on it and are visible there. You do not wonder how such a long procession of events could be manifest on such a small screen. Similarly with the objects and the brain.

D.: Then cosmic consciousness is not the same as realisation?

M.: Cosmic consciousness is behind the ego. It may be called *Isvara*, and the ego is *jiva*. *Isvara* may also be said to be the Absolute. There is no difference there.

Para = *Absolute*

↓

Isvara = *Cosmic consciousness (Mahat)*

↓

Jiva —— *Jagat* = *Individual consciousness and the world*

The consciousness which pervades even *Isvara* is the Absolute one.

Talk 178.

D.: What is the flame mentioned in *Vichara Sangraha*. It is said to be *Atma Jyoti* and one is directed to find the reality behind it.

M.: The Vedas mention the flame, *Tasyas sikhaya madhye paramatma vyavasthitah*. That flame is to be identified with the ego-consciousness.

11th March, 1936

Talk 179.

Mr. Frydman had asked Swami Ramdas something, to which he replied that there would be no more births for himself. The engineer had pointed out there should be no anxiety regarding rebirth. There will be the same Rama, the same Ramdas, the same search for Rama and the same bliss of realisation. What objection could be there for the repetition of this Rama-Lila? Ramdas had admitted that there could be no objection, that it would be an enjoyment and a game. The engineer further said that Ramdas added that Ramdas had found Rama merged in Him and happy in that union. They are the same, still there was Ramdas, there was Rama, there was the union, there was the Bliss. That is eternal. Saying it, he asked what Sri Bhagavan would say to it.

M.: It is all as true as the present events.

Talk 180.

Later, the same gentleman said that sleep was a state of oblivion and the wakeful state was the mind's activity. The mind was in a potential state in sleep.

M.: Were you not in sleep?

D.: Yes, I was. But in a state of oblivion. There must be a witness of oblivion and of the mind which says that 'I' am continuous in both states.

M.: Who is this witness? You speak of 'witness'. There must be an object and a subject to witness. These are creations of the mind. The idea of witness is in the mind. If there was the witness of oblivion did he say, 'I witness oblivion'? You, with your mind, said just now that there must be a witness. Who was the witness? You must reply 'I'. Who is that 'I' again? You are identifying yourself with the ego and say 'I'. Is this ego 'I', the witness? It is the mind that speaks. It cannot be witness of itself. With self-imposed limitations you think that there is a witness of mind and of oblivion. You also say, "I am the witness". That one who witnesses the oblivion must say, "I witness oblivion". The present mind cannot arrogate to itself that position.

The whole position becomes thus untenable. Consciousness is unlimited. On becoming limited it simply arrogates to itself the position. There is really nothing to witness. IT is. simple BEING.

Talk 181.

D.: Yad gatva na nivartante tad dhama paramam mama. Which is that *dhama*? Is it not the Absolute state beyond cosmic consciousness?

M.: Yes.

D.: '*Na Nivartante*' would mean not covered by ignorance again.

M.: Yes.

D.: Does it follow by inference that those who reach Cosmic Consciousness have not escaped from the clutches of ignorance?

M.: That is what is meant by saying that all lokas, even the Brahma loka, do not release one from rebirth. *Vide*. the *Bhagavad Gita:* "Reaching ME, there is no rebirth .... All others are in bondage." Moreover, so long as you think that there is *gati* (movement) - as implied in the word *gatva* (having gone to) - there is *punaravritti* (return) also. Again *gati* implies your *Purvagamanam* (birth). What is birth? It is birth of ego.

Once born you reach something; if you reach it you return also. Therefore leave off all this verbiage! *Be as you are*. See who you are and remain as the Self, free from birth, going, coming and returning.

D.: True. However often this truth is heard, still it eludes us and we forget it.

M.: Quite so. Reminders are often necessary.

Talk 182.

In the course of the day an interesting photo was missing. Sri Bhagavan appeared concerned about it. Mr. Frydman asked how Sri Bhagavan viewed all these matters. Sri Bhagavan said: "Suppose you dream that you are taking me to Poland. You wake up and ask me. 'I dreamt so and so. Did you dream so or know it? Or how do you view it'?"

D.: But you are not aware of the happenings in front of you?

M.: These are all workings of the mind and the questions also.

Then again Sri Bhagavan related an episode in Sri Rama's search for Sita. Parvati asked Siva why Rama, the Perfect Being, was grieving at the loss of Sita. Siva said that Rama was still Perfect. If the Perfection need be tested and made clear, Parvati might appear as Sita before Rama and see what happened. So she did. Rama ignored her appearance and was still crying out, "Ha! Sita! Ha! Sita!" and moved on like a blind man, without taking any notice of Parvati - (*Cf.* Dialogue 218.)

13th March, 1936

Talk 183.

A gentleman from Bombay said: "I asked Mother in Sri Aurobindo Ashram the following question: 'I keep my mind blank without thoughts arising so that God might show Himself in His true Being. But I do not perceive anything.

"*The reply was to this effect:* 'The attitude is right. The Power will come down from above. It is a direct experience'."

So he asked what further he should do.

M.: Be what you are. There is nothing to come down or become manifest. All that is needful is to lose the ego, That what is, is always there. Even now you are That. You are not apart from it. The blank is seen by you. You are there to see the blank. What do you wait for? The thought "I have not seen," the expectation to see and the desire of getting something, are all the working of the ego. You have fallen into the snares of the ego. The ego says all these and not *you. Be yourself* and nothing more!

Talk 184.

M.: To imagine *Muladhara* at the bottom, the Heart at the centre, or the head at the top or over all these, is all wrong. In one word, *to think is not your real nature*.

Talk 185.

M.: In the sacred literature the following are seen:-

"Said without uttering"

"Showed remaining still as ever," etc.

Which is this unspoken word? It is only Silence, *Pranava* or the *Mahavakya*.* These are also called *the Word*.

Talk 186.

M.: We read a newspaper and all the articles therein, but do not care to know anything about the paper itself. We take the chaff but not the substance. The substratum on which all this is printed is the paper and if we know the substratum all else will be known (like wall and paintings).

D.: You said the only ONE which exists is the REAL. What is that only ONE?

M.: The ONE only is the *Sat*, the existence, that appears as the world, the things that we see and we ourselves.

D.: What is Atman? Is there a finality for the ATMAN?

M.: First learn what is Atman. If we know this then we can query as to whether it has a finality or not. Which do you call ATMAN?

D.: Jiva is ATMAN.

M.: Learn what *jiva* is. What is the difference between *jiva* and Atman? Is *jiva* itself Atman or is there any separate thing as Atman? There is an end for what you observe; that which is created has a destruction or end. That which is not created has no end. That which exists cannot be observed. It is unobservable. We must find out what it is that appears; the destruction of that which appears is the end. *That which exists, exists for ever; that which newly appears is later lost.*

D.: What happens after birth in human form, what happens to the *jiva*?

M.: Let us know first what we are. We do not understand what we are, and until we know what we are there is no room for such a question. (Bhagavan obviously here refers to the confusion of body as Atman - *dehatma buddhi* - which is the cause for this confusion of ideas of death and birth, for Atman has no birth or death, it is untainted by the elements of Earth, Fire, Air and Water, etc.) (*Gita* II, 11) - *Asochyam anvosochas tvam, projnavadamscha bhashase*, etc. - What is it that had birth? Whom do you call a man? If, instead of seeking explanation for birth, death and after-death matters, the

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* Mahavakyas are four: (1) "That art Thou." (2) "I am Brahman." (3) "This Self is Brahman." (4) "*Prajnana* (Absolute Knowledge) is Brahman."

question is raised as to who and how you are now, these questions will not arise. You are the same while asleep (deep sleep), in dream and in waking state. Is the 'I' thought *jiva*, or the body *jiva*? Is this thought or nature? Or is the experience that we live, etc., our nature? (Quotes the sloka from the *Gita: Yada te* . . . II, 52.)

D.: Why is *Atma vichara* necessary?

M.: If you do not make *Atma vichara*, then *loka vichara* creeps in. That which is not, is sought for, but not that which is obvious. When once you have found what you seek, *vichara* (enquiry) also ceases and you rest in it. As long as one is confusing the body with the Atman, Atman is said to be lost and one is said to seek for it, but the ATMAN itself is never lost. It always exists. A body is said to be Atman, an *indriya* is said to be Atman, then there is the *Jivatman* and *Paramatman* and what not. There are a thousand and one things called Atman. The search for Atman is to know that which is really Atman.

SAMADHI: KEVALA AND SAHAJA

Talk 187.

D.: I maintain that the physical body of the man sunk in *samadhi* as a result of unbroken contemplation of the Self becomes motionless for that reason. It may be active or inactive. The mind fixed in such contemplation will not be affected by the body or the senses being restless. A disturbance of the mind is not always the forerunner of physical activity. Another man asserts that physical unrest certainly prevents *nirvikalpa samadhi* or unbroken contemplation. What is your opinion? You are the standing proof of my statement.

M.: Both of you are right, you refer to *sahaja nirvikalpa* and the other refers to *kevala nirvikalpa*. In the one case the mind lies immersed in the Light of the Self (whereas the same lies in the darkness of ignorance in deep sleep). The subject discriminates one from the other - *samadhi*, stirring up from *samadhi*, and activity thereafter, unrest of the body, of the sight of the vital force and of the mind, the cognizance of objects and activity, are all obstructions for him.

In *sahaja*, however, the mind has resolved itself into the Self and has been lost. Differences and obstructions mentioned above do not therefore exist here. The activities of such a being are like the feeding

of a somnolent boy, perceptible to the onlooker (but not to the subject). The driver sleeping on his moving cart is not aware of the motion of the cart, because his mind is sunk in darkness. Similarly the *sahaja jnani* remains unaware of his bodily activities because his mind is dead - having been resolved in the ecstasy of *Chit Ananda* (Self).

The two words contemplation and *samadhi* have been used loosely in the question.

Contemplation is a forced mental process, whereas *samadhi* lies beyond effort.

Sleep	*Kevala*	*Sahaja*
(1) mind alive (2) sunk in oblivion	(1) mind alive (2) sunk in light (3) like a bucket with the rope left lying in the water in a well; (4) to be drawn out by the other end of the rope.	(1) mind dead (2) resolved into the Self; (3) like a river discharged into the ocean and its identity lost; (4) a river cannot be redirected from the ocean.

Talk 188.

The essence of mind is only awareness or consciousness. When the ego, however, dominates it, it functions as the reasoning, thinking or sensing faculty. The cosmic mind being not limited by the ego, has nothing separate from itself and is therefore only aware. This is what the Bible means by "I am that I AM".

The ego-ridden mind has its strength sapped and is too weak to resist the torturing thoughts. The egoless mind is happy in deep, dreamless sleep. Clearly therefore Bliss and misery are only modes of mind; but the weak mode is not easily interchangeable with the strong mode. Activity is weakness and consequently miserable; passivity is strength and therefore blissful. The dormant strength is not apparent and therefore not availed of.

The cosmic mind, manifesting in some rare being, is able to effect the linkage in others of the individual (weak) mind with the universal (strong) mind of the inner recess. Such a rare being is called the GURU or *God in manifestation*.

19th May, 1936

Talk 189.

Mr. M. Oliver Lacombe, a middle-aged Frenchman who was on a visit to India being delegated by the Institute of Indian Civilisation of the University of Paris, came here from French India. Among others he had desired to meet Maharshi; he came and stayed here about three hours. He had read, in the Sanskrit original, the Bhagavad Gita, the Upanishads and the Sutras with commentaries by Sri Sankara and Ramanuja.

He asked: Is Maharshi's teaching the same as Sankara's?

M.: Maharshi's teaching is only an expression of his own experience and realisation. Others find that it tallies with Sri Sankara's.

D.: Quite so. Can it be put in other ways to express the same realisation?

M.: A realised person will use his own language. Sri Bhagavan added: SILENCE is the best language.

D.: What does Maharshi say about *hatha yoga* or *Tantric* practices?

M.: Maharshi does not criticise any of the existing methods. All are good for the purification of the mind. Because the purified mind alone is capable of grasping his method and sticking to its practice.

D.: Which is the best of the different yogas, *Karma, Jnana, Bhakti* or *Hatha*?

M.: See stanza 10 of "Upadesa Sara". To remain in the Self amounts to all these in their highest sense.

Maharshi added: In dreamless sleep there is no world, no ego and no unhappiness. But the Self remains. In the waking state there are all these; yet there is the Self. One has only to remove the transitory happenings in order to realise the ever-present beatitude of the Self. Your nature is Bliss. Find that on which all the rest are superimposed and you then remain as the pure Self.

D.: Yes. It amounts to the removal of alien limitations for discovering the ever-present Self. That is what Sankara says. There is no attainment or loss.

M.: Quite so. (Aside) He understands.

D.: How is work to be done ordinarily for an aspirant?

M.: Without self-identification with the actor. For instance, did you intend visiting this place while in Paris?

D.: No!

M.: You see how you are acting without your intention to do so? The Gita says that a man cannot remain without acting. The purpose of one's birth will be fulfilled whether you will it or not. Let the purpose fulfil itself.

D.: Why are there so many methods mentioned? For instance Sri Ramakrishna says that *bhakti* is the best means for salvation.

M.: It is according to the standpoint of the aspirant. You have studied the Gita. Sri Krishna said: "There was never a time when I, and you, and these kings were not; nor will they not be in future. That which is unreal never exists. But that which is real never disappears. All that ever was even now is and will ever be." Again, "I taught this Truth to Aditya; he taught it to Manu; etc." Arjuna asked: "How can it be? You were born some years back and only recently. How could you have taught Aditya?" Sri Krishna answered; "Yes. We have had several births in the past. I know mine; whereas you do not know yours. I tell you what happened in those past births."

Look! That Krishna who began saying there was not I, nor were you, nor these kings, says now that he had several births before. Krishna does not contradict Himself, though it looks like it. He conforms to the outlook of Arjuna and speaks to him from his level.

There is a parallel passage in the Bible where Jesus says, "Before Abraham was, I am". The teachings of the Sages are suited to the time, place, people and other surroundings.

The visitor said he was leaving with regret. ...

Maharshi smilingly interrupted, "There is no leaving or returning." The Frenchman at once said, "He has transcended time and space." He returned to Pondicherry.

30th May, 1936

Talk 190.

There is a pet squirrel in the hall which usually retires into its cage before nightfall. Just as Maharshi was telling it to retire for the night a visitor who had announced that he had attained the transcendent consciousness suggested that water might be offered to it, since it was likely to be thirsty on this hot evening. His presumption to understand animals evoked no response. He repeated it. After a few minutes' silence Maharshi said, "You are probably thirsty after your long meditation in the hot Sun on the hotter rocks and you would like to drink a jug of water."

D.: Quite so. I have taken water.

M.: The squirrel is not so thirsty. Because you were practising austerities in the heat of the Sun you should feel thirsty. Why prescribe it for the squirrel?

Maharshi added: I noticed him standing on the hot rocks facing the Sun with eyes closed. I stood there for a while but did not want to disturb him and came away. These people do as they please.

D.: What I did, I did not intend beforehand. It was spontaneous.

M.: Oh! I see! Whatever we others do, we do with intention! You seem to have transcended all!

D.: This is not the first time I did so. You yourself inspire me and make me do all these things. Yet you ask me why I did it. How is it?

M.: I see. You are doing actions being controlled by me. Then the fruits also should be considered similarly to be mine and not yours.

D.: So they are undoubtedly. I act not of my free will but inspired by you. I have no will of my own.

M.: Enough of this rubbish! So did Duryodhana of old (in the *Mahabharata*) say:

janami dharmam nacha me pravrittih,
janamyadharmam nacha me nivrittih.
kenapi devana hridi sthitena
yatha niyuktosmitatha karomi.

What is the difference between you two?

D.: I see no difference. But I have no will and act without it.

M.: You have risen high above the common run. We others are acting with personal will.

D.: How, Sir? You have said in one of your works that action can be automatic.

M.: Enough! Enough! You and another visitor behave as transcendental beings! You are both fully learned. You need not learn more. I would not have said all this had you not been coming here frequently. Do as you please. But these eccentricities of the beginner's stage will become known in their true light after some time.

D.: But I have been in this state for such a long time.

M.: Enough!

Talk 191.

Mr. Cohen, a resident disciple, was speaking of yoga method.

Maharshi remarked: Patanjali's first sutra is applicable to all systems of yoga. The aim is the cessation of mental activities. The methods differ. So long as there is effort made towards that goal it is called yoga. The effort is the yoga.

The cessation can be brought about in so many ways.

(1) By examining the mind itself. When the mind is examined, its activities cease automatically. This is the method of *jnana*. The pure mind is the Self.

(2) Looking for the source of the mind is another method. The source may be said to be God or Self or consciousness.

(3) Concentrating upon one thought make all other thoughts disappear. Finally that thought also disappears; and

(4) *Hatha Yoga*.

All methods are one and the same inasmuch as they all tend to the same goal.

It is necessary to be aware while controlling thoughts. Otherwise it will lead to sleep. That awareness, the chief factor, is indicated by the fact of Patanjali emphasising *pratyahara, dharana, dhyana, samadhi* even after *pranayama*. *Pranayama* makes the mind steady

and suppresses thoughts. Then why develop further? Because awareness then is the one necessary factor. Such states can be imitated by taking morphia, chloroform, etc. They do not lead to *Moksha* because they lack awareness.

3rd June, 1936

Talk 192.

Maharshi explained in the course of conversation:

Whoever desires liberation? Everyone wants only happiness - happiness too as found in the enjoyment of the senses. This question was asked of a Guru, and the latter answered: "Quite so. That happiness which is the result of enjoyment by the senses is the same as that of liberation. That desire of such liberation is one of the four qualifications for attainment. This is common to all. So all are eligible for this knowledge - Self-knowledge."

In fact there may not be found any individual in the world who possesses all the qualities in perfection necessary for an aspirant as mentioned in Yoga Sutras, etc. Still pursuit of Self-knowledge should not be abandoned.

Everyone is the Self by his own experience. Still he is not aware, he identifies the Self with the body and feels miserable. This is the greatest of all mysteries. One is the Self. Why not abide as the Self and be done with miseries?

In the beginning one has to be told that he is not the body, because he thinks that he is the body only. Whereas he is the body and all else. The body is only a part. Let him know it finally. He must first discern consciousness from insentience and be the consciousness only. Later let him realise that insentience is not apart from consciousness.

This is discrimination (*viveka*). The initial discrimination must persist to the end. Its fruit is liberation.

Talk 193.

Maharshi observed: Free-will and destiny are ever-existent. Destiny is the result of past action; it concerns the body. Let the body act as may suit it. Why are you concerned with it? Why do you pay attention

to it? Free-will and Destiny last as long as the body lasts. But wisdom (*jnana*) transcends both. The Self is beyond knowledge and ignorance. Should anything happen, it happens as the result of one's past actions, of divine will and of other factors.

Talk 194.

Mr. Subba Rao, a visitor from Amalapuram, asked: How to control the mind?

M.: Get hold of the mind.

D.: How?

M.: Mind is intangible. In fact, it does not exist. The surest way of control is to seek it. Then its activities cease.

6th June, 1936

Talk 195.

Mr. Jharka, a gentleman from the University of Benares, holding the M.A. and the M.Sc. degrees, said that he was stricken with grief due to bereavement of wife and children. He sought peace of mind and asked how to get it.

M.: It is in the mind that birth and death, pleasure and pain, in short the world and ego exist. If the mind is destroyed all these are destroyed too. Note that it should be annihilated, not just made latent. For the mind is dormant in sleep. It does not know anything. Still, on waking up, you are as you were before. There is no end of grief. But if the mind be destroyed the grief will have no background and will disappear along with the mind.

D.: How to destroy the mind?

M.: Seek the mind. On being sought, it will disappear.

D.: I do not understand.

M.: The mind is only a bundle of thoughts. The thoughts arise because there is the thinker. The thinker is the ego. The ego, if sought, will vanish automatically. The ego and the mind are the same. The ego is the root-thought from which all other thoughts arise.

D.: How to seek the mind?

M.: Dive within. You are now aware that the mind rises up from within. So sink within and seek.

D.: I do not yet understand how it is to be done.

M.: You are practising breath-control. Mechanical breath-control will not lead one to the goal. It is only an aid. While doing it mechanically take care to be alert in mind and remember the 'I' thought and seek its source. Then you will find that where breath sinks, there 'I-thought' arises. They sink and rise together. The 'I-thought' also will sink along with breath. Simultaneously, another luminous and infinite 'I-I' will become manifest, which will be continuous and unbroken. That is the goal. It goes by different names - God, Self, *Kundalini Sakti, Consciousness, Yoga, Bhakti, Jnana,* etc.

D.: Not clear yet.

M.: When the attempt is made, it will of itself take you to the goal.

9th June, 1936

Talk 196.

A visitor asked about the three methods mentioned in *Ramana Gita* - Chapter II.

Maharshi pointed out that breath-retention is an aid to control of mind, *i.e.*, suppression or annihilation of thoughts. One person may practise breath-control, inhalation, exhalation and retention or retention only. Still another type of practising meditator, on controlling the mind, controls the breath and its retention automatically results. Watching the inhalation and exhalation is also breath-control. These methods are only apparently three-fold. They are in fact really one, because they lead to the same goal. They are however differently adopted according to the stage of the aspirant and his antecedent predisposition or tendencies. Really there are only two methods: enquiry and devotion. One leads to the other.

D.: Seeking the 'I' there is nothing to be seen.

M.: Because you are accustomed to identify yourself with the body and sight with the eyes, therefore, you say you do not see anything. What is there to be seen? Who is to see? How to see? There is only one consciousness which, manifesting as 'I-thought', identifies itself

with the body, projects itself through the eyes and sees the objects around. The individual is limited in the waking state and expects to see something different. The evidence of his senses will be the seal of authority. But he will not admit that the seer, the seen and the sight are all manifestations of the same consciousness - namely, 'I-I'. Contemplation helps one to overcome the illusion that the Self must be visual. In truth, there is nothing visual. How do you feel the 'I' now? Do you hold a mirror before you to know your own being? The awareness is the 'I'. Realise it and that is the truth.

D.: On enquiry into the origin of thoughts there is a perception of 'I'. But it does not satisfy me.

M.: Quite right. The perception of 'I' is associated with a form, maybe the body. There should be nothing associated with the pure Self. The Self is the unassociated, pure Reality, in whose light, the body, the ego, etc. shine. On stilling all thoughts the pure consciousness remains over.

Just on waking from sleep and before becoming aware of the world there is that pure 'I-I'. Hold to it without sleeping or without allowing thoughts to possess you. If that is held firm it does not matter even though the world is seen. The seer remains unaffected by the phenomena.

Talk 197.

Gul and Shirin Byramjee, two Parsi ladies of Ahmedabad, arrived this day. They spoke at night to Maharshi: "Bhagavan! We have been spiritually inclined from our childhood. We have read several books on philosophy, and are attracted by Vedanta. So we read the Upanishads, *Yoga Vasishtha*, Bhagavad Gita, etc. We try to meditate, but there is no progress in our meditation. We do not understand how to realise. Can you kindly help us towards realisation?"

M.: How do you meditate?

D.: I begin to ask myself "Who am I?", eliminate body as not 'I', the breath as not 'I', the mind as not 'I' and I am not able to proceed further.

M.: Well, that is so far as the intellect goes. Your process is only intellectual. Indeed, all the scriptures mention the process only to

guide the seeker to know the Truth. The Truth cannot be directly pointed out. Hence this intellectual process.

You see, the one who eliminates all the *not I* cannot eliminate the 'I'. To say 'I am not this' or 'I am that' there must be the 'I'. This 'I' is only the ego or the 'I-thought'. After the rising up of this 'I-thought', all other thoughts arise. The 'I-thought' is therefore the root-thought. If the root is pulled out all others are at the same time uprooted. Therefore seek the root 'I', question yourself "Who am I?"; find out its source. Then all these will vanish and the pure Self will remain ever.

D.: How to do it?

M.: The 'I' is always there - in deep sleep, in dream and in wakefulness. The one in sleep is the same as that who now speaks. There is always the feeling of 'I'. Otherwise do you deny your existence? You do not. You say 'I am'. Find out who is.

D.: Even so, I do not understand. 'I', you say, is the wrong 'I' now. How to eliminate this wrong 'I'?

M.: You need not eliminate the wrong 'I'. How can 'I' eliminate itself? All that you need do is to find out its origin and abide there. Your efforts can extend only thus far. Then the Beyond will take care of itself. You are helpless there. No effort can reach it.

D.: If 'I' am always - here and now, why do I not feel so?

M.: That is it. Who says it is not felt? Does the real 'I' say it or the false 'I'? Examine it. You will find it is the wrong 'I'. The wrong 'I' is the obstruction. It has to be removed in order that the true 'I' may not be hidden. The feeling that I have not realised is the obstruction to realisation. In fact it is already realised; there is nothing more to be realised. Otherwise, the realisation will be new; it has not existed so far, it must take place hereafter. What is born will also die. If realisation be not eternal it is not worth having. Therefore what we seek is not that which must happen afresh. It is only that which is eternal but not now known due to obstructions; it is that we seek. All that we need do is to remove the obstruction. That which is eternal is not known to be so because of ignorance. Ignorance is the obstruction. Get over this ignorance and all will be well.

The ignorance is identical with the 'I-thought'. Find its source and it will vanish.

The 'I-thought' is like a spirit which, although not palpable, rises up simultaneously with the body, flourishes and disappears with it. The body-consciousness is the wrong 'I'. Give up this body-consciousness. It is done by seeking the source 'I'. The body does not say 'I am'. It is you who say, 'I am the body!' Find out who this 'I' is. Seeking its source it will vanish.

D.: Then, will there be bliss?

M.: Bliss is coeval with Being-Consciousness. All the arguments relating to the eternal Being of that Bliss apply to Bliss also. Your nature is Bliss. Ignorance is now hiding that Bliss. Remove the ignorance for Bliss to be freed.

D.: Should we not find out the ultimate reality of the world, individual and God?

M.: These are all conceptions of the 'I'. They arise only after the advent of the 'I-thought'. Did you think of them in your deep sleep? You existed in deep sleep and the same you are now speaking. If they be real should they not be in your sleep also? They are only dependent upon the 'I-thought'. Again does the world tell you 'I am the world'? Does the body say 'I am body'? You say, "This is the world", "this is body" and so on. So these are only your conceptions. Find out who you are and there will be an end of all your doubts.

D.: What becomes of the body after realisation? Does it exist or not? We see realised beings acting like others.

M.: This question need not arise now. Let it be asked after realisation, if need be. As for the realised beings let them take care of themselves. Why do you worry about them?

In fact, after realisation the body and all else will not appear different from the Self.

D.: Being always Being-Consciousness-Bliss, why does God place us in difficulties? Why did He create us?

M.: Does God come and tell you that He has placed you in difficulties? It is you who say so. It is again the wrong 'I'. If that disappears there will be no one to say that God created this or that.

That which is does not even say 'I am'. For, does any doubt rise that 'I am not'? Only in such a case should one be reminding oneself 'I am a man'. One does not. On the other hand, if a doubt arises whether he is a cow or a buffalo he has to remind himself that he is not a cow, etc., but 'I am a man.' This would never happen. Similarly with one's own existence and realisation.

10th June, 1936

Talk 198.

Some ladies asked if there is rebirth of man as a lower animal.

M.: Yes. It is possible, as illustrated by Jada Bharata - the scriptural anecdote of a royal sage, having been reborn as a deer.

D.: Is the individual capable of spiritual progress in the animal body?

M.: Not unlikely, though it is exceedingly rare

D.: What is Guru's Grace? How does it work?

M.: Guru is the Self.

D.: How does it lead to realisation?

M.: Isvaro gururatmeti ... (God is the same as Guru and Self ...). A person begins with dissatisfaction. Not content with the world he seeks satisfaction of desires by prayers to God; his mind is purified; he longs to know God more than to satisfy his carnal desires. Then God's Grace begins to manifest. God takes the form of a Guru and appears to the devotee; teaches him the Truth; purifies the mind by his teachings and contact; the mind gains strength, is able to turn inward; with meditation it is purified yet further, and eventually remains still without the least ripple. That stillness is the Self. The Guru is both exterior and interior. From the exterior he gives a push to the mind to turn inward; from the interior he pulls the mind towards the Self and helps the mind to achieve quietness. That is Grace.

Hence there is no difference between God, Guru and Self.

Talk 199.

The ladies later asked several questions relating to their present inability to realise the already realised, eternal Self. The sign of Realisation would be Bliss, which was absent.

Maharshi said: There is only one consciousness. But we speak of several kinds of consciousness, as body-consciousness, Self-consciousness. They are only relative states of the same Absolute consciousness. Without consciousness, time and space do not exist. They appear in consciousness. It is like a screen on which these are cast as pictures and move as in a cinema show. The Absolute consciousness is our real nature.

D.: From where do these objects arise?

M.: Just from where you rise. Know the subject first and then question about the object.

D.: It is only one aspect of the question.

M.: The subject comprehends the object also. That one aspect is an all-comprehensive aspect. See yourself first and then see the objects. What is not in you cannot appear outside.

D.: I am not satisfied.

M.: Satisfaction can be only when you reach the source. Otherwise restlessness exists.

D.: Is the Supreme Being with or without attributes?

M.: Know first if you are with or without attributes.

D.: What is samadhi?

M.: One's own true nature.

D.: Why then is effort necessary to attain it?

M.: Whose is the effort?

D.: Maharshi knows that I am ignorant.

M.: Do you know that you are ignorant? Knowledge of ignorance is no ignorance.

All scriptures are only for the purpose of investigating if there are two consciousnesses. Everyone's experience proves the existence of only one consciousness. Can that one divide itself into two? Is any division felt in the Self? Awaking from sleep one finds oneself the same in the wakeful as well as in the sleep states. That is the experience of each one. The difference lies in seeking, in the outlook. Because you imagine that you are the seer separate from the experience, this difference arises. Experience shows that your being is the same all through.

D.: From where did ignorance come?

M.: There is no such thing as ignorance. It never arises. Everyone is Knowledge itself. Only Knowledge does not shine easily. The dispelling of ignorance is Wisdom which always exists - *e.g.*, the necklace remaining round the neck though supposed to have been lost; or each of the ten fools failing to count himself and counting only the others. To whom is knowledge or ignorance?

D.: Can we not proceed from external to internal?

M.: Is there any difference like that? Do you feel the difference - external and internal - in your sleep? This difference is only with reference to the body and arises with body-consciousness ('I-thought'). The so-called waking state is itself an illusion.

Turn your vision inward and then the whole world will be full of Supreme Spirit. The world is said to be illusion. Illusion is really Truth. Even the material sciences trace the origin of the universe to some one primordial matter - subtle, exceedingly subtle.

God is the same both to those who say the world is real and to their opponents. Their outlook is different. You need not entangle yourself in such disputations. The goal is one and the same for all. Look to it.

14th June, 1936

Talk 200.

Mr. Cohen desired an explanation of the term "blazing light" used by Paul Brunton in the last chapter of *A Search in Secret India*.

Maharshi: Since the experience is through the mind only it appears first as a blaze of light. The mental predispositions are not yet destroyed. The mind is however functioning in its infinite capacity in this experience.

As for *nirvikalpa samadhi* i.e., *samadhi*, of non-differentiation (undifferentiated, supreme, beatific repose), it consists of pure consciousness, which is capable of illumining knowledge or ignorance; it is also beyond light or darkness. That it is not darkness is certain; can it be however said to be not light? At present objects are perceived only in light. Is it wrong to say that realisation of one's Self requires a light? Here *light* would mean the consciousness which reveals as the Self only.

The yogis are said to see photisms of colours and lights preliminary to Self-Realisation by the practice of yoga.

Once before Goddess Parvati practised austerities for realising the Supreme. She saw some kinds of light. She rejected them because they emanated from the Self, leaving the Self as it was ever before. She determined that they were not supreme. She continued Her austerities and experienced a limitless light. She determined that this also was only a phenomenon and not the Supreme Reality. Still she continued Her austerities until she gained transcendental peace. She realised that it was Supreme, that the Self was the sole Reality.

The *Taittiriya Upanishad* says, "Seek Brahman through penance". Later on, "Penance is Brahman". Another Upanishad says, "Itself is penance which is again made up of wisdom alone". "There the sun shines not, nor the moon, nor the stars, nor fire; all these shine forth by Its light".

Talk 201.

The Parsi ladies asked for an illustration to explain why the Self, though ever-present and most intimate, is not being realised.

Maharshi cited the stories of (1) *Svakanthabharanam katha* - the story of the necklace, on the neck itself, not being detected; (2) *Dasama* - of the ten fools who counted only nine, each of them omitting to count himself; (3) the lion's cub, brought up in a herd of goats; (4) Karna not knowing his real parentage and (5) the king's son brought up in a low-class family.

They further asked for Maharshi's opinion of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga, and his claim to have probed beyond the experiences of the Vedic *rishis* and the Mother's opinion of the fitness of her disciples to begin with the realisation of the Upanishadic *rishis*.

M.: Aurobindo advises complete surrender. Let us do that first and await results, and discuss further, if need be afterwards and not now. There is no use discussing transcendental experiences by those whose limitations are not divested. Learn what surrender is. It is to merge in the source of the ego. The ego is surrendered to the Self. Everything is dear to us because of love of the Self.

The Self is that to which we surrender our ego and let the Supreme Power, *i.e*., the Self, do what it pleases. The ego is already the Self's. We have no rights over the ego, even as it is. However, supposing we had, we must surrender them.

D.: What about bringing down divine consciousness from above?

M.: As if the same is not already in the Heart? "O Arjuna, I am in the expanse of the Heart," says Sri Krishna "He who is in the sun, is also in this man", says a *mantra* in the Upanishads. "The Kingdom of God is within", says the Bible. All are thus agreed that God is within. What is to be brought down? From where? Who is to bring what, and why?

Realisation is only the removal of obstacles to the recognition of the eternal, immanent Reality. Reality is. It need not be taken from place to place.

D.: What about Aurobindo's claim to start from Self-Realisation and develop further?

M.: Let us first realise and then see.

Then Maharshi began to speak of similar theories: The *Visishtadvaitins* say that the Self is first realised and the realised individual soul is surrendered to the universal soul. Only then is it complete. The part is given up to the whole. That is liberation and *sayujya* union. Simple Self-Realisation stops at isolating the pure Self, says *Visishtadvaita*.

The *siddhas* say that the one who leaves his body behind as a corpse cannot attain *mukti*. They are reborn. Only those whose bodies dissolve in space, in light or away from sight, attain liberation. The *Advaitins* of Sankara's school stop short at Self-Realisation and this is not the end, the *siddhas* say.

There are also others who extol their own pet theories as the best, *e.g*., late Venkaswami Rao of Kumbakonam, Brahmananda Yogi of Cuddappah, etc.

The fact is: There is Reality. It is not affected by any discussions. Let us abide as Reality and not engage in futile discussions as to its nature, etc.

15th June, 1936

Talk 202.

A sad-looking Punjabi gentleman announced himself to Maharshi as having been directed to him by Sri Sankaracharya of Kamakotipeetam, from Jalesvar near Puri, Jagannath. He is a world tourist. He has practised *Hatha Yoga* and some contemplation along the lines of "I am Brahman". In a few moments a blank prevails, his brain gets heated and he gets afraid of death. He wants guidance from Maharshi.

M.: Who sees the blank?

D.: I know that I see it.

M.: The consciousness overlooking the blank is the Self.

D.: That does not satisfy me. I cannot realise it.

M.: The fear of death is only after the 'I-thought' arises. Whose death do you fear? For whom is the fear? There is the identification of the Self with the body. So long as there is this, there will be fear.

D.: But I am not aware of my body.

M.: Who says that he is not aware?

D.: I do not understand.

He was then asked to say what exactly was his method of meditation. He said: "*Aham Brahmasmi*" ("I am Brahman").

M.: "I am Brahman" is only a thought. Who says it? Brahman itself does not say so. What need is there for it to say it? Nor can the real 'I' say so. For 'I' always abides as Brahman. To be saying it is only a thought. Whose thought is it? All thoughts are from the unreal 'I'. *i.e.*, the 'I'- thought. Remain without thinking. So long as there is thought there will be fear.

D.: As I go on thinking of it there is forgetfulness, the brain becomes heated and I am afraid.

M.: Yes, the mind is concentrated in the brain and hence you get a hot sensation there. It is because of the 'I-thought'. So long as there is thought there will be forgetfulness. There is the thought "I am Brahman"; forgetfulness supervenes; then the 'I-thought' arises and simultaneously the fear of death also. Forgetfulness and thought are

for 'I-thought' only. Hold it; it will disappear as a phantom. What remains over is the real 'I'. That is the Self. 'I am Brahman' is an aid to concentration. It keeps off other thoughts. That one thought alone persists. See whose is that thought. It will be found to be from 'I'. Wherefrom is the 'I' thought? Probe into it. The 'I-thought' will vanish. The Supreme Self will shine forth of itself. No further effort is needed.

When the one Real 'I' remains alone, it will not be saying; "I am Brahman". Does a man go on repeating "I am a man"? Unless he is challenged, why should he declare himself a man? Does anyone mistake oneself for a brute, that he should say "No. I am not a brute; I am a man"? Similarly, Brahman or 'I' being alone, there is no one there to challenge it and so there is no need to be repeating "I am Brahman".

17th June, 1936

Talk 203.

Mr. Varma, Financial Secretary of the Posts and Telegraphs Department, Delhi: He has read Paul Brunton's *Search in Secret India* and *The Secret Path*. He lost his wife with whom he had led a happy life for eleven or twelve years. In his grief he seeks solace. He does not find solace in reading books: wants to tear them up. He does not intend to ask questions. He simply wants to sit here and derive what solace he can in the presence of Maharshi.

Maharshi, as if in a train of thoughts, spoke now and then to the following effect:

It is said, "The wife is one-half of the body". So her death is very painful. This pain is however due to one's outlook being physical; it disappears if the outlook is that of the Self. The *Brahadaranyaka Upanishad* says, "The wife is dear because of the love of the Self". If the wife and others are identified with the Self, how then will pain arise? Nevertheless such disasters shake the mind of philosophers also.

We are happy in deep sleep. We remain then as the pure Self. The same we are just now too. In such sleep there was neither the wife nor others nor even 'I'. Now they become apparent and give rise to

pleasure or pain. Why should not the Self, which was blissful in deep sleep, continue its blissful nature even now? The sole obstruction to such continuity is the wrong identification of the Self with the body.

The Bhagavad Gita says: "The unreal hath no being; the real never ceaseth to be; the truth about both hath been perceived by the seers of the essence of things." "The real is ever real, the unreal is ever unreal." Again: "He is not born, nor doth he die; nor, having been, ceaseth he anymore to be; unborn, perpetual, eternal ancient, he is not slain when the body is slaughtered." Accordingly, there is neither birth nor death. Waking is birth and sleep is death.

Was the wife with you when you went out to the office, or in your deep sleep? She was away from you. You were satisfied because of your thought that she was somewhere. Whereas now you think that she is not. The difference lies in the different thoughts. That is the cause of pain. The pain is because of the thought of the wife's non-being. All this is the mischief of the mind. The fellow (*i.e*. the mind) creates pain for himself even when there is pleasure. But pleasure and pain are mental creations.

Again, why mourn the dead? They are free from bondage. Mourning is the chain forged by the mind to bind itself to the dead.

"What if anyone is dead? What if anyone is ruined? Be dead yourself - be ruined yourself". In that sense there is no pain after one's death. What is meant by this sort of death? Annihilation of the ego, though the body is alive. If the ego persists the man is afraid of death. The man mourns another's death. He need not do so if he predeceases them (by waking up from the ego-dream, which amounts to killing the ego-sense). The experience of deep sleep clearly teaches that happiness consists in being without the body. The wise also confirm it, speaking of liberation after the body is given up. Thus the sage is awaiting the casting off of the body. Just as a labourer carrying a load on his head for the sake of wages bears the burden with no pleasure, carries it to the destination, and finally unburdens himself with relief and joy; so also the sage bears this body, awaiting the right and destined time to discard it. If now you are relieved of one half of the burden, *i.e*., the wife, should you not be thankful and be happy for it?

Nevertheless you cannot be so because of your physical outlook.

Even men who ought to know better and who have known the teaching about liberation after death etc., glorify liberation along with the body and call it some mysterious power of keeping the body eternally alive!

There will be no pain if the physical outlook is given up and if the person exists as the Self. Mourning is not the index of true love. It betrays love of the object, of its shape only. That is not love. True love is shown by the certainty that the object of love is in the Self and that it can never become non-existent. (Maharshi cited the story of Ahalya and Indra from *Yoga Vasishta* in this connection.)

Still it is true, pain on such occasions can only be assuaged by association with the wise.

18th June, 1936

Talk 204.

Maharshi on Self-Illumination: The 'I' concept is the ego. I-illumination is the Realisation of the Real Self. It is ever shining forth as 'I-I' in the intellectual sheath. It is pure Knowledge; relative knowledge is only a concept. The bliss of the blissful sheath is also but a concept. Unless there is the experience, however subtle it is, one cannot say "I slept happily". From his intellect he speaks of his blissful sheath. The bliss of sleep is but a concept to the person, the same as intellect. However, the concept of experience is exceedingly subtle in sleep. Experience is not possible without simultaneous knowledge of it (*i.e.* relative knowledge).

The inherent nature of the Self is Bliss. Some kind of knowledge has to be admitted, even in the realisation of Supreme Bliss. It may be said to be subtler than the subtlest.

The word *vijnana* (clear knowledge) is used both to denote the Realisation of the Self and knowing the objects. The Self is wisdom. It functions in two ways. When associated with the ego the knowledge is objective (*vijnana*). When divested of the ego and the Universal Self is realised, it is also called *vijnana*. The word raises a mental concept. Therefore we say that the Self-Realised

Sage knows by his mind, but his mind is pure. Again we say that the vibrating mind is impure and the placid mind is pure. The pure mind is itself Brahman; therefore it follows that Brahman is not other than the mind of the sage.

The *Mundaka Upanishad* says: "The knower of Brahman becomes the Self of Brahman." Is it not ludicrous? To know Him and become Him? They are mere words. The sage is Brahman - that is all. Mental functioning is necessary to communicate his experience. He is said to be contemplating the unbroken expanse. The Creator, Suka and others are also said never to swerve from such contemplation.

निमिषार्धं न तिष्टन्ति वृत्तिं ब्रह्ममयीं विना ।
यथा तिष्ठन्ति ब्रह्मद्याः सनकाद्याः शुकादयः ॥

- *Tejo Bindu Upanishad*. 1 - 47

Such 'contemplation' is again a mere word. How is that to be contemplated unless it is divided (into the contemplator and the contemplated). When undivided, how is contemplation possible? What function can Infinity have? Do we say that a river after its discharge into the ocean has become an ocean-like river? Why should we then speak of contemplation which has become unbroken, as being that of unbroken Infinity? The statement must be understood in the spirit in which it is made. It signifies the merging into the Infinite.

Self-Illumination or Self-Realisation is similar to it. The Self is ever shining. What does this 'I-illumination' mean then? The expression is an implied admission of mind function.

The gods and the sages experience the Infinite continuously and eternally, without their vision being obscured at any moment. Their minds are surmised by the spectators to function; but in fact they do not. Such surmise is due to the sense of individuality in those who draw inferences. There is no mental function in the absence of individuality. Individuality and mind functions are co-existent. The one cannot remain without the other.

The light of the Self can be experienced only in the intellectual sheath. Therefore *vijnana* of whatever kind (of object or of the Self) depends on the Self being Pure Knowledge.

Talk 205.

Mr. Cohen had been cogitating on the nature of the Heart, if the 'spiritual heart' beats; if so, how; or if it does not beat, then how is it to be felt?

M.: This heart is different from the physical heart; beating is the function of the latter. The former is the seat of spiritual experience. That is all that can be said of it.

Just as a dynamo supplies motive power to whole systems of lights, fans, etc., so the original Primal Force supplies energy to the beating of the heart, respiration, etc.

D.: How is the 'I-I' consciousness felt?

M.: As an unbroken awareness of 'I'. It is simply consciousness.

D.: Can we know it when it dawns?

M.: Yes, as consciousness. You are that even now. There will be no mistaking it when it is pure.

D.: Why do we have such a place as the 'Heart' for meditation?

M.: Because you seek consciousness. Where can you find it? Can you reach it externally? You have to find it internally. Therefore you are directed inward. Again the 'Heart' is only the seat of consciousness or the consciousness itself.

D.: On what should we meditate?

M.: Who is the meditator? Ask the question first. Remain as the meditator. There is no need to meditate.

Talk 206.

Mr. B. C. Das, a Lecturer in Physics of Allahabad University, asked: "Does not intellect rise and fall with the man?"

M.: Whose is the intellect? It is man's. Intellect is only an instrument.

D.: Yes. Does it survive man's death?

M.: Why think of death? See what happens in your sleep. What is your experience there?

D.: But sleep is transient whereas death is not.

M.: Sleep is intermediate between two waking states, so also death is between two successive births. Both are transient.

D.: I mean when the spirit is disembodied, does it carry the intellect with it?

M.: Spirit is not disembodied. The bodies differ. It may not be a gross body. It will then be a subtle body, as in sleep, dream or day-dream. Intellect does not alter; the bodies may differ according to circumstances.

D.: The spirit-body is the astral body then?

M.: The intellect is the astral body now.

D.: How can it be?

M.: Why not? You seem to think that the intellect cannot be limited like a body. It is only an aggregate of certain factors. What else is the astral body?

D.: But intellect is a sheath?

M.: Yes. Without intellect, no sheath is cognised. Who says that there are five sheaths? Is it not the intellect that declares thus?

Talk 207.

Deep sleep is only the state of non-duality. Can the difference between the individual and Universal souls persist there? Sleep implies forgetfulness of all differences: This alone constitutes happiness. See how carefully people prepare their beds to gain that happiness. Soft cushions, pillows and all the rest are meant to induce sound sleep, that is to say to end wakefulness. And yet the soft bed, etc., are of no use in the state of deep sleep itself. The implication is that all efforts are meant only to end ignorance. They have no use after realisation.

Talk 208.

It is enough that one surrenders oneself. Surrender is to give oneself up to the original cause of one's being. Do not delude yourself by imagining such source to be some God outside you. One's source is within yourself. Give yourself up to it. That means that you should seek the source and merge in it. Because you imagine yourself to be out of it, you raise the question "Where is the source?" Some contend that the sugar cannot taste its own sweetness and that a taster must taste and enjoy it. Similarly, an individual cannot be the Supreme and enjoy the Bliss of that state;

therefore the individuality must be maintained on the one hand and God-head on the other so that enjoyment may result! Is God insentient like sugar? How can one surrender oneself and yet retain one's individuality for supreme enjoyment? Furthermore they say also that the soul, reaching the divine region and remaining there, serves the Supreme Being. Can the sound of the word "service" deceive the Lord? Does He not know? Is He waiting for these people's service? Would not He - the Pure Consciousness - ask in turn: "Who are you apart from Me that presume to serve Me?"

Still more, they assume that the individual soul becomes pure by being divested of the ego and fit for being the body of the Lord. Thus the Lord is the Spirit and the purified souls constitute His body and limbs! Can there be a soul for the souls? How many souls are there? The answer must be, "There are many individual souls and One Supreme Soul." What is soul in that case? It cannot be the body, etc. What remains over after all these are eliminated must be said to be the soul. Thus even after realising the soul as that which cannot be discarded, the Supreme Soul must be known to exist. In that case, how was the soul realised to be the ultimate reality after discarding all that was alien to it? Should this be right, the soul which was described as that inalienable reality is not the true soul. All such confusion is due to the word 'soul' (atma). The same word atma is used to signify the body, the senses, the mind, the vital principle, the individual soul and the Supreme Being. This wide application of the word has given rise to the idea that the individual soul (*jivatma*), goes to constitute the body of the Supreme (*Paramatma*). "I, O Arjuna! am the *Self*, seated in the heart of all beings; ..." (Bhagavad Gita, X-20). The stanza shows that the Lord is the Atma (Self) of all beings. Does it say, "the Self of the selves"? If, on the other hand, you merge in the Self there will be no individuality left. You will become the Source itself. In that case what is surrender? Who is to surrender what and to whom? This constitutes devotion, wisdom, and investigation.

Among the Vaishnavites too, Saint Nammalvar says, "I was in a maze, sticking to 'I' and 'mine'; I wandered without knowing my Self. On realising my Self I understand that I myself am You and that 'mine' (*i.e.*, my possessions) is only You."

Thus - you see - Devotion is nothing more than knowing oneself. The school of Qualified Monism also admits it. Still, adhering to their traditional doctrine, they persist in affirming that the individuals are part of the Supreme - his limbs as it were. Their traditional doctrine says also that the individual soul should be made pure and then surrendered to the Supreme; then the ego is lost and one goes to the regions of Vishnu after one's death; then finally there is the enjoyment of the Supreme (or the Infinite)!

To say that one is apart from the Primal Source is itself a pretension; to add that one divested of the ego becomes pure and yet retains individuality only to enjoy or serve the Supreme, is a deceitful stratagem. What duplicity is this - first to appropriate what is really His, and then pretend to experience or serve Him! Is not all this already known to Him?

19th June, 1936

Talk 209.

Mr. B. C. Das, the Physics Lecturer, asked about free-will and destiny.

M.: Whose will is it? 'It is mine', you may say. You are beyond will and fate. Abide as that and you transcend them both. That is the meaning of conquering destiny by will. Fate can be conquered. Fate is the result of past actions. By association with the wise the bad tendencies are conquered. One's experiences are then viewed to their proper perspective.

I exist now. I am the enjoyer. I enjoy fruits of action. I was in the past and shall be in the future. Who is this 'I'? Finding this 'I' to be pure Consciousness beyond action and enjoyment, freedom and happiness are gained. There is then no effort, for the Self is perfect and there remains nothing more to gain.

So long as there is individuality, one is the enjoyer and doer. But if it is lost, the divine Will prevails and guides the course of events. The individual is perceptible to others who cannot perceive divine force. Restrictions and discipline are for other individuals and not for the liberated.

Free-will is implied in the scriptural injunctions to be good. It implies overcoming fate. It is done by wisdom. The fire of wisdom consumes all actions. Wisdom is acquired by association with the wise, or rather, its mental atmosphere.

Talk 210.

Man owes his movements to another Power, whereas he thinks that he does everything himself - just like a lame man bluffing that, were he helped to stand up, he would fight and chase away the enemy. Action is impelled by desire; desire arises only after the rise of the ego; and this ego owes its origin to a Higher Power on which its existence depends. It cannot remain apart. Why then prattle, "I do, I act, or I function"?

A Self-realised being cannot help benefiting the world. His very existence is the highest good.

Talk 211.

Mr. B. C. Das, the Physics Lecturer, asked: "Yoga means union. I wonder union of which with which."

M.: Exactly. Yoga implies prior division and it means later union of one with another. Who is to be united with whom? You are the seeker, seeking union with something. That something is apart from you. Your Self is intimate to you. You are aware of the Self. Seek it and be it. That will expand as the Infinite. Then there will be no question of yoga, etc. Whose is the separation (*viyoga*)? Find it.

D.: Are the stones, etc. destined to be always so?

M.: Who sees stones? They are perceived by your senses, which are in turn actuated by your mind. So they are in your mind. Whose mind is it? The questioner must find it himself. If the Self be found this question will not arise.

The Self is more intimate than the objects. Find the subject, and the objects will take care of themselves. The objects are seen by different persons according to their outlook and these theories are evolved. But who is the seer, the cogniser of these

theories? It is you. Find your Self. Then there is an end of these vagaries of the mind.

D.: What is this mind?

M.: A bundle of thoughts.

D.: Wherefrom has it its origin?

M.: Consciousness of the Self.

D.: Then thoughts are not real.

M.: They are not: the only reality is the Self.

Talk 212.

Maharshi observed: *Pradakshina* (the Hindu rite of going round the object of worship) is "All is within me." The true significance of the act of going round Arunachala is said to be as effective as circuit round the world. That means that the whole world is condensed into this Hill. The circuit round the temple of Arunachala is equally good; and self-circuit (*i.e.*, turning round and round) is as good as the last. So all are contained in the Self. Says the Ribhu Gita: "I remain fixed, whereas innumerable universes becoming concepts within my mind, rotate within me. This meditation is the highest circuit (*pradakshina*)."

20th June, 1936

Talk 213.

Mr. B. C. Das asked why the mind cannot be turned inward in spite of repeated attempts.

M.: It is done by practice and dispassion and that succeeds only gradually. The mind, having been so long a cow accustomed to graze stealthily on others' estates, is not easily confined to her stall. However much her keeper tempts her with luscious grass and fine fodder, she refuses the first time; then she takes a bit; but her innate tendency to stray away asserts itself; and she slips away; on being repeatedly tempted by the owner, she accustoms herself to the stall; finally even if let loose she would not stray away. Similarly with the mind. If once it finds its inner happiness it will not wander outward.

Talk 214.

Mr. Eknatha Rao, a frequent visitor, asked: Are there not modulations in contemplation according to circumstances?

M.: Yes. There are; at times there is illumination and then contemplation is easy; at other times contemplation is impossible even with repeated attempts. This is due to the working of the three Gunas (qualities in nature).

D.: Is it influenced by one's activities and circumstances?

M.: Those cannot influence it. It is the sense of doership - *kartrutva buddhi* - that forms the impediment.

22nd June, 1936

Talk 215.

Maharshi was reading G. U. Pope's translation of *Tiruvachakam* and came across the stanzas describing the intense feeling of *bhakti* as thrilling the whole frame, melting the flesh and bones, etc. He remarked: "Manickavasagar is one of those whose body finally resolved itself in a blazing light, without leaving a corpse behind."

Another devotee asked how it could be.

Maharshi said the gross body is only the concrete form of the subtle stuff - the mind. When the mind melts away and blazes forth as light, the body is consumed in that process. Nandanar is another whose body disappeared in blazing light.

Maj. Chadwick pointed out that Elisha disappeared in the same way. He desired to know if the disappearance of Christ's body from the tomb was like that.

M.: No. Christ's body was left as a corpse which was at first entombed, whereas the others did not leave corpses behind.

In the course of conversation, Maharshi said that the subtle body is composed of light and sound and the gross body is a concrete form of the same.

The Lecturer in Physics asked if the same light and sound were cognisable by senses.

M.: No. They are super-sensual. It is like this:

	Isvara (Universal)	*Jiva* (Individual)
Gross	Universe	Body
Subtle	Sound and Light - *Nada, Bindu*	Mind and *Prana*
Primal	*Atma* (Self) *Param* (transcendental)	*Atma* (Self) *Param* (transcendental)

They are ultimately the same.

The subtle body of the Creator is the mystic sound *Pranava*, which is sound and light. The universe resolves into sound and light and then into transcendence - *Param*.

Talk 216.

Maharshi gave the meaning of Arunachala:

Aruna = Red, bright like fire.

The fire is not ordinary fire which is only hot.

This is *Jnanagni* (Fire of Wisdom) which is neither hot nor cool.

Achala = a hill.

So it means Hill of Wisdom.

29th June, 1936

Talk 217.

Mr. A. Bose, an engineer from Bombay, asked: Does Bhagavan feel for us and show grace?

M.: You are neck-deep in water and yet cry for water. It is as good as saying that one neck-deep in water feels thirsty, or a fish in water feels thirsty, or that water feels thirsty.

D.: How may one destroy the mind?

M.: Is there a mind in the first place? What you call mind is an illusion. It starts from the 'I-thought'. Without the gross or subtle senses you cannot be aware of the body or the mind. Still it is possible for you

to be without these senses. In such a state you are either asleep or aware of the Self only. Awareness of Self is ever there. Remain what you truly are and this question will not arise.

D.: Is the body consciousness an impediment to realization?

M.: We are always beyond the body or the mind. If however you feel the body as the Self, then it is of course an impediment.

D.: Is the body or the mind of any use for the Self?

M.: Yes, inasmuch as it helps Self-realisation.

30th June, 1936

Talk 218.

Maharshi has been looking into the *Siva Purana* this day. He says:

Siva has the transcendental and immanent aspects as represented by His invisible, transcendental being and the *linga* aspect respectively. The *linga* originally manifested as Arunachala stands even to this day. This manifestation was when the moon was in the constellation of Orion (*Ardra*) in December. However it was first worshipped on Sivaratri day which is held sacred even now.

In the sphere of speech *Pranava* (the mystic sound AUM) represents the transcendental (*nirguna*) and the *Panchakshari* (the five-syllabled mantra) represents the immanent aspect (*saguna*).

Again Sri Bhagavan recounts the anecdote of Parvati testing Rama. The story is as follows:

Rama and Lakshmana were wandering in the forest in search of Sita. Rama was grief-stricken. Just then Siva and Parvati happened to pass close by. Siva saluted Rama and passed on. Parvati was surprised and asked Siva to explain why He, the Lord of the Universe, being worshipped by all, should stop to salute Rama, an ordinary human who having missed his consort was grief-stricken and moving in anguish in the wilderness and looking helpless. Siva then said: "Rama is simply acting as a human being would under the circumstances. He is nevertheless the incarnation of Vishnu, and deserves to be saluted. You may test him if you choose."

Parvati considered the matter, took the shape of Sita and appeared in front of Rama, as he was crying out the name of Sita in great anguish.

He looked at Parvati appearing as Sita, smiled and asked, "Why, Parvati, are you here? Where is Sambhu? Why have you taken the shape of Sita?" Parvati felt abashed and explained how she went there to test him and sought an explanation for Siva saluting him.

Rama replied: "We are all only aspects of Siva, worshipping Him at sight and remembering Him out of sight."

Talk 219.

Ramakrishna Swami, a long-resident disciple, asked Maharshi the meaning of *Twaiyarunachala Sarvam*, a stanza in *The Five Hymns*.

Maharshi explained it in detail, saying that the universe is like a painting on a screen - the screen being the Red Hill, Arunachala. That which rises and sinks is made up of what it rises from. The finality of the universe is the God Arunachala. Meditating on Him or on the seer, the Self, there is a mental vibration 'I' to which all are reduced. Tracing the source of 'I', the primal 'I-I' alone remains over, and it is inexpressible. The seat of Realisation is within and the seeker cannot find it as an object outside him. That seat is bliss and is the core of all beings. Hence it is called the Heart. The only useful purpose of the present birth is to turn within and realise it. There is nothing else to do.

D.: How is annihilation of predispositions to be accomplished?

M.: You are in that condition in realisation.

D.: Does it mean that, holding on to the Self, the tendencies should be scorched as they begin to emerge?

M.: They will themselves be scorched if only you remain as you truly are.

1st July, 1936

Talk 220.

Mr. B. C. Das, the Physics Lecturer, asked: Contemplation is possible only with control of mind and control can be accomplished only by contemplation. Is it not a vicious circle?

M.: Yes, they are interdependent. They must go on side by side. Practice and dispassion bring about the result gradually. Dispassion is practised to check the mind from being projected outward; practice is to keep

it turned inward. There is a struggle between control and contemplation. It is going on constantly within. Contemplation will in due course be successful.

D.: How to begin? Your Grace is needed for it.

M.: Grace is always there. "Dispassion cannot be acquired, nor realization of the Truth, nor inherence in the Self, in the absence of Guru's Grace," the Master quoted.

Practice is necessary. It is like training a roguish bull confined to his stall by tempting him with luscious grass and preventing him from straying.

Then the Master read out a stanza from *Tiruvachakam*, which is an address to the mind, saying: "O humming bee (namely, mind)! Why do you take the pains of collecting tiny specks of honey from innumerable flowers? There is one from whom you can have the whole storehouse of honey by simply thinking or seeing or speaking of Him. Get within and hum to Him (*hrimkara*)."

D.: Should one have a form in one's mind, supplemented with reading or chanting God's name in one's meditation?

M.: What is mental conception except it be meditation?

D.: Should the form be supplemented by repetition of *mantras* or dwelling on divine attributes?

M.: When *japa* is the predominating tendency, vocal *japa* becomes eventually mental, which is the same as meditation.

Talk 221.

Mr. Bose: A form means duality. Is that good?

M.: One who questions like that had better adopt the path of enquiry. Form is not for him.

D.: In my meditation a blank interposes; I see no figure.

M.: Of course not.

D.: What about the blank?

M.: Who sees the blank? You must be there. There is consciousness witnessing the blank.

D.: Does it mean that I must go deeper and deeper?

M.: Yes. There is no moment when you are not.

2nd July, 1936

Talk 222.

Dr. Popatlal Lohara, a visitor, has studied several books including "Upadesa Sara" and visited several saints, *sadhus* and yogis, probably 1,500 as he puts their number. A *sadhu* in Trimbak has told him that he has still debts to pay which, if done, will enable him to have realisation. His only debt, as he conceived it, was the marriage of his son. It has since been performed and he now feels himself free from *karmic* indebtedness. He therefore seeks Sri Bhagavan's guidance for freedom from 'mental unhappiness' which persists in spite of his not being indebted.

M.: Which text of "Upadesa Sara" did you read?

D.: The Sanskrit text.

M.: It contains the answer to your question.

D.: My mind cannot be made steady by any amount of effort. I have been trying it since 1918.

The Master quoted from "Upadesa Sara": "Merging the mind into the Heart certainly comprises meritorious duty (*karma*), devotion (*bhakti*), yoga and supreme wisdom (*jnana*)." That is the whole truth in a nutshell.

D.: That does not satisfy my search for happiness. I am unable to keep my mind steady.

The Master quoted again from the same book: "Continuous search for what the mind is results in its disappearance. That is the straight path."

D.: How to search for the mind then?

M.: The mind is only a bundle of thoughts. The thoughts have their root in the 'I-thought'. He quoted; "Whoever investigates the origin of the 'I-thought', for him the ego perishes. This is the true investigation." The true "I" is then found shining by itself.

D.: This 'I-thought' rises from me. But I do not know the Self.

M.: All these are only mental concepts. You are now identifying yourself with a wrong 'I', which is the 'I-thought'. This 'I-thought' rises and sinks, whereas the true significance of 'I' is beyond both. There cannot be a break in your being. You, who slept, are also now awake. There was not unhappiness in your deep sleep. Whereas it

exists now. What is it that has happened now so that this difference is experienced? There was no 'I-thought' in your sleep, whereas it is present now. The true 'I' is not apparent and the false 'I' is parading itself. This false 'I' is the obstacle to your right knowledge. Find out wherefrom this false 'I' arises. Then it will disappear. You will be only what you are - *i.e.*, absolute Being.

D.: How to do it? I have not succeeded so far.

M.: Search for the source of the 'I-thought'. That is all that one has to do. The universe exists on account of the 'I-thought'. If that ends there is an end of misery also. The false 'I' will end only when its source is sought.

Dr. Lohara asked for the meaning of one stanza in "Upadesa Sara".

M.: The one then in sleep is also now awake. There was happiness in sleep; but misery in wakefulness. There was no 'I'- thought in sleep; but it is now, while awake. The state of happiness and of no 'I-thought' in sleep is without effort. The aim should be to bring about that state even now. That requires effort.

Sleep	Wakefulness	Bring about sleep even in the waking state and that is realisation. Effort is directed to extinguishing the 'I-thought' and not for ushering the true 'I'. For the latter is eternal and requires no effort on your part.
Effortless Happiness No 'I-thought'	No happiness 'I-thought'	

Talk 223.

Dr. Lohara: Why does the mind not sink into the Heart even while meditating?

M.: A floating body does not readily sink unless some means are adopted for making it do so. Breath-control makes the mind quiescent. The mind must be alert and meditation pursued unremittingly even when it is at peace. Then it sinks into the heart. Or the floating body might be loaded with weights and made to sink. So also association with the wise will make the mind sink into the Heart.

Such association is both mental and physical. The extremely visible being (of the Guru) pushes the mind inward. He is also in the heart of the seeker and so he draws the latter's inward-bent mind into the Heart.

This question is asked only when the man begins to meditate and finds it difficult. Let him practise breath-control just a little and the mind will be purified. It does not now sink into the heart because the latent tendencies stand as obstacles. They are removed by breath-control or association with the wise. In fact the mind is always in the Heart. But it is restive and moves about on account of latent tendencies. When the tendencies are made ineffective it will be restful and at peace.

By breath-control the mind will be only temporarily quiescent, because the tendencies are still there. If the mind is transformed into the Self it will no longer give trouble. That is done by meditation.

Talk 224.

A disciple asked how he could recognise his own natural primal condition.

M.: Absolute freedom from thoughts is the state conducive to such recognition.

(*From the attendant's notes*)

Talk 225.

When Sri Bhagavan and Rangaswami, an attendant, were on the rocks, Bhagavan noticed someone in the Asramam rocking in a rocking chair, and remarked to the attendant:

"Siva made over all His own possessions to Vishnu and wandered away in the forests and wilderness and cemeteries and lived on food begged by Him. In His view non-possession is higher in the scale of happiness than possession of things."

D.: What is that higher happiness?

M.: To be free from anxieties. Possessions create anxieties such as their safeguarding, their utilisation, etc. Non-possession does not bring any anxieties in its train. Therefore Siva resigned everything in favour of Vishnu and He himself went away happy.

Divestment of possessions is the highest happiness.

3rd July, 1936

Talk 226.

A visitor from Tirukoilur asked if the study of the sacred books will reveal the truth.

M.: That will not suffice.

D.: Why not?

M.: Samadhi alone can reveal it. Thoughts cast a veil over Reality and so it cannot be clear in states other than *Samadhi*.

D.: Is there thought in Samadhi? Or is there not?

M.: There will only be the feeling '*I am*' and no other thoughts.

D.: Is not '*I am*' a thought?

M.: The egoless 'I am' is not thought. It is realisation. The meaning or significance of 'I' is God. The experience of '*I am*' is to *Be Still*.

4th July, 1936

Talk 227.

The Master observed: "Being of the nature of Bliss why does one continue to crave for happiness? To be rid of that craving is itself salvation. The Scriptures say, 'You are That'. The imparting of that knowledge is their purpose. The realisation must be by your finding out who you are and abiding as That, *i.e.* your Self. To be repeating, 'I am that' or 'not this' is only a waste of time. For the worthy disciple, the work lies within himself and not without."

As Bhagavan was descending the Hill, one of the workers, just outside the Asramam stopped work and was about to prostrate before the Master.

Then the Master said: "To engage in your duty is the true prostration."

The Master's attendant asked: "How?"

M.: To perform one's duty carefully is the greatest service to God. (Then, smiling, he entered the hall.)

Talk 228.

At lunch a visitor from Nellore asked the Master for a tiny bit of food (*prasad*) from His dish.

M.: Eat without thinking of the ego. Then what you eat becomes Bhagavan's *prasad*.

After lunch the Master continued humorously: "If I had given you one morsel from my plate, each one would ask for a morsel too. What will be left for me if I distribute the whole plate to others? So you see that it is not devotion. There is no significance in eating a morsel from my plate. Be a true devotee."

8th July, 1936

Talk 229.

At 8 a.m. the pet squirrel was watching for an opportunity to run out. The Master remarked. "All wish to rush out. There is no limit to going out. Happiness lies within and not without."

20th July, 1936

Talk 230.

A visitor: Can one realise the Truth by learning the scriptures and study of books?

M.: No. So long as predispositions remain latent in the mind, realisation cannot be achieved. Sastra learning is itself a *vasana*. Realisation is only in *samadhi*.

Talk 231.

A visitor asked: 'What is *mouna* (silence)?'

M.: Mouna is not closing the mouth. It is eternal speech.

D.: I do not understand.

M.: That state which transcends speech and thought is *mouna*.

D.: How to achieve it?

M.: Hold some concept firmly and trace it back. By such concentration silence results. When practice becomes natural it will end in silence.

Meditation without mental activity is silence. Subjugation of the mind is meditation. Deep meditation is eternal speech.

D.: How will worldly transaction go on if one observes silence?

M.: When women walk with water pots on their heads and chat with their companions they remain very careful, their thoughts concentrated on the loads on their heads. Similarly when a sage engages in activities, these do not disturb him because his mind abides in Brahman.

Talk 232.

The Master said on another occasion: "Only the sage is a true devotee."

Talk 233.

D.: What is the result of "Rama Japa" (repetition of God Rama's name)?

M.: 'Ra' is Reality, 'Ma' is the mind; their union is the fruit of "Rama Japa". Utterance of words is not enough. The elimination of thoughts is wisdom. It is the Absolute Existence.

Talk 234.

A Muslim visitor asked about *asana* (physical posture).

M.: Abidance in God is the only true posture.

Talk 235.

Mr. T. K. S. Iyer, a disciple, was excited because someone in the town had spoken disparagingly of the Master. He did not retort and came away excited. So he asked Master what penalty should be paid for his failure to defend him.

M.: Patience, more patience; tolerance, more tolerance!

Talk 236.

On the death of King George V two devotees were discussing the matter in the hall. They were very upset. The Master said to them. "Whoever dies or is lost, what is that to you? Die yourself and lose yourself, becoming one with love."

Talk 237.

A man brought with him a silver idol of Subrahmanya and copper idols of Valli and Devayanai. He said to Sri Bhagavan: "I have been worshipping them for the last ten years but have been rewarded only with calamities. What shall I do with them?

When I asked others, they attribute my worries to some fault in the make-up of the idols - for instance, the difference in the metals of their make. Is it so?"

M.: Did they say that it was wrong to worship?

Talk 238.

In answer to some question Maharshi said: "There is a state when words cease and silence prevails."

D.: How to communicate thought to each other?

M.: That is only when there is the notion of two.

D.: How to get peace?

M.: That is the natural state. The mind obstructs the innate peace. Our investigation is only in the mind. Investigate the mind; it will disappear.

There is no entity by name mind. Because of the emergence of thoughts we surmise something from which they start. That we term mind. When we probe to see what it is, there is nothing like it. After it has vanished, Peace will be found to remain eternal.

D.: What is *buddhi* (intellect)?

M.: The thinking or discriminating faculty. These are mere names. Be it the ego, the mind or the intellect, it is all the same. Whose mind? Whose intellect? The ego's. Is the ego real? No. We confound the ego and call it intellect or mind.

D.: Emerson says, "Soul answers soul by itself - not by description or words."

M.: Quite so. However much you learn, there will be no bounds to knowledge. You ignore the doubter but try to solve the doubts. On the other hand, hold on to the doubter and the doubts will disappear.

D.: Then the question resolves itself to knowing the Self.

M.: Quite so.

D.: How to know the Self?

M.: See what the Self is. What you consider to be the Self, is really either the mind or the intellect or the 'I-thought'. The other thoughts arise only after the 'I-thought'. So hold on to it. The others will vanish leaving the Self as the residuum.

D.: The difficulty lies in reaching it.

M.: There is no reaching it at all because it is eternal, here and now. If the Self were to be gained anew, it would not be permanent.

D.: How to obtain equanimity or peace or equilibrium of mind? What is the best way?

M.: I have already answered it. Investigate the mind. It is eliminated and you remain over. Let your standpoint become that of wisdom then the world will be found to be God.

dristin jnanamayim kritva pasyet Brahmamayam jagat.

So the question is one of outlook. You pervade all. See yourself and all are understood. But you have now lost hold of your Self and go about doubting other things.

D.: How to know the Self?

M.: Are there two 'I's? How do you know your own existence? Do you see yourself with these eyes? Question yourself. How does this question arise? Do I remain to ask it or not? Can I find my Self as in a mirror?

Because your outlook has been outward bent, it has lost sight of the Self and your vision is external. The Self is not found in external objects. Turn your look within and plunge down; you will be the Self.

D.: Is discovery of the Self dependent on the observance of caste rules? Or should we flout them?

M.: Not in the beginning. Observe them to start with. Caste-rules serve as a check on the vagaries of the mind. It is thus purified.

D.: The unknowable can be attained only by the grace of the unknowable.

M.: He helps the attainment. That is the Grace.

D.: How to check the mind?

M.: Will a thief betray himself? Will the mind find itself? The mind cannot seek the mind. You have ignored what is real and are holding on to the mind which is unreal and also trying to find what it is. Was there mind in your sleep? It was not. It is now here. It is therefore impermanent. Can the mind be found by you? The mind is not you. You think you are the mind and therefore ask me how it is checked. If it is there it can be checked. But it is not. Understand this truth by search. Search for unreality is fruitless. Therefore seek the reality, *i.e.*, the Self. That is the way to rule over the mind. There is only one thing Real!

D.: What is the one Real thing?

M.: That is what is: the others are only appearances. Diversity is not its nature. We are reading the printed characters on paper but ignore the paper which is the background. Similarly you are taken up by the manifestations of the mind and let go the background. Whose fault is it?

D.: Is there a limit to the Self?

M.: What is the Self?

D.: The Individual soul is the Self.

M.: What is the individual soul? Is there any difference between the two or are they identical?

Any new appearances are bound to disappear. Anything created will certainly be destroyed. The eternal is not born nor does it die. We are now confounding appearances with reality. Appearance carries its end in itself. What is it that appears newly? If you cannot find it, surrender to the substratum of appearances unreservedly; then, the reality will be left over as the residue.

D.: What happens to the man after death?

M.: Engage yourself in the living present. The future will take care of itself. Do not worry about the future. The state before creation and the process of creation are dealt with in the scriptures in order that you may know the present. Because you say you are born, therefore they say, yes, and add that God created you.

But do you see God or anything else in your sleep? If God be real why does He not shine forth in your sleep also? *You are always* - now the same as you were in sleep. You are not different from that one in sleep. But why should there be difference in the feelings or experiences of the two states?

Did you ask, while asleep, the question regarding your birth? or where do I go after death? Why think of all these now in the wakeful state? Let what is born think of its birth and the remedy, its cause and ultimate results.

What is birth? Is it of the 'I-thought' or of the body? Is 'I' separate from the body or identical with it? How did this 'I-thought' arise? Is the 'I-thought' your nature or is anything else of your nature?

D.: Who is to ask these questions?

M.: Exactly - that is it. There is no end to it all.

D.: Are we then to keep quiet?

M.: Doubts cease to afflict when the confusion (*moha*) is surpassed.

D.: Your statements amount to cessation of *vichara* - investigation.

M.: If *atma-vichara* (self-investigation), ceases, *loka vichara* (world-investigation) takes its place. (Laughter in the hall).

Engage in Self-investigation, then the non-self will disappear. The Self will be left over. This is self-investigation of the Self. The one word Self is equivalent to the mind, body, man, individual. the Supreme and all else.

Talk 239.

Mr. M. Frydman: One imagines things and enjoys them by strength of imagination. Such creations are possible to Brahma the Creator. Can the same statement apply to His creature, man?

M.: This is also your thought.

D.: Krishnamurti says that man should find out the 'I'. Then 'I' dissolves away, being only a bundle of circumstances. There is nothing behind the 'I'. His teaching seems to be very much like Buddha's.

M.: Yes - yes, beyond expression.

23rd August, 1936

Talk 240.

D.: The world is materialistic. What is the remedy for it?

M.: Materialistic or spiritual, it is according to your outlook.

Drishtim jnanamayim kritva, Brahma mayam pasyet jagat Make your outlook right. The Creator knows how to take care of His Creation.

D.: What is the best thing to do for ensuring the future?

M.: Take care of the present, the future will take care of itself.

D.: The future is the result of the present. So, what should I do to make it good? Or should I keep still?

M.: Whose is the doubt? Who is it that wants a course of action? Find the doubter. If you hold the doubter the doubts will disappear. Having lost hold of the Self the thoughts afflict you; the world is seen, doubts arise, also anxiety for the future.

Hold fast to the Self, these will disappear.

D.: How to do it?

M.: This question is relevant to matters of non-self, but not to the Self. Do you doubt the existence of your own Self?

D.: No. But still, I want to know how the Self could be realised. Is there any method leading to it?

M.: Make effort. Just as water is got by boring a well, so also you realise the Self by investigation.

D.: Yes. But some find water readily and others with difficulty.

M.: But you already see the moisture on the surface. You are hazily aware of the Self. Pursue it. When the effort ceases the Self shines forth.

D.: How to train the mind to look within?

M.: By practice. The mind is the intelligent phase leading to its own destruction, for Self to manifest.

D.: How to destroy the mind?

M.: Water cannot be made dry water. Seek the Self; the mind will be destroyed.

29th August, 1936

Talk 241.

D.: How to avoid misery?

M.: Has misery a shape? Misery is only unwanted thought. The mind is not strong enough to resist it.

D.: How to gain such strength of mind?

M.: By worship of God.

D.: Meditation of the God of Immanence is hard to understand.

M.: Leave God alone. Hold your Self.

D.: How to do *japa* (repetition of *mantras*)?

M.: It is of two kinds - gross and subtle. The latter is meditation on it, and it gives strength to the mind.

D.: But the mind does not get steady for meditation.

M.: It is due to lack of strength.

D.: Sandhya is usually done mechanically. Similarly other religious duties. Is it useful? Is it not better to do *japa*, etc., knowing their meanings?

M.: Um! Um!

Talk 242.

A Gujarati gentleman asked Sri Bhagavan: They say that choice is offered to us to enjoy merits or demerits after our death. Their succession will be according to our choice. Is it so?

M.: Why raise these questions relating to events after death? Why ask "Was I born? Am I reaping fruits of my past karma," and so on? They will not be raised some time hence when you fall asleep. Why? Are you now different from the one in sleep? You are not. Why do these questions arise now and not in sleep? Find out.

Talk 243.

A middle-aged, weak-looking man came with a walking stick in his hand, placed it before Bhagavan, bowed low and sat near Maharshi. He got up and with great humility offered the stick to Bhagavan, saying that it was sandal-wood. Sri Bhagavan told him to keep it for himself. Because nothing of Bhagavan's can be safeguarded. Being common property but coveted by some, it will be taken away by any visitor with or without Bhagavan's permission. Then the donor may be displeased.

But the man still humbly insisted. Sri Bhagavan could not resist his supplications, and said, "Keep it yourself as *prasad* from Bhagavan." The man then requested that the stick might first be taken and then given to him by Sri Bhagavan with blessings. Sri Bhagavan received it, smelled it, said it was fine, nodded, and handed it back to the man, saying, "Keep it. It will make you always remember me."

Talk 244.

A Maharani Saheba spoke in a gentle and low voice, but quite audibly:

D.: "Maharajji, I have the good fortune to see you. My eyes have had the pleasure of seeing you, my ears the pleasure of hearing your voice.

"I am blessed with everything that a human being would like to have." Her Highness's voice choked. With great strength of mind she rallied and proceeded slowly, "I have all that I want, a human being would want …. But ... But ... I ... I ... do not have peace of mind ... Something prevents it. Probably my destiny...."

There was silence for a few minutes. Then Maharshi in his usual sweet manner spoke:

M.: "All right. What need be said has been said. Well. What is destiny? There is no destiny. Surrender, and all will be well. Throw all the responsibility on God. Do not bear the burden yourself. What can destiny do to you then?"

D.: Surrender is impossible.

M.: Yes. Complete surrender is impossible in the beginning. Partial surrender is certainly possible for all. In course of time that will lead to complete surrender. Well, if surrender is impossible, what can be done? There is no peace of mind. You are helpless to bring it about. It can be done only by surrender.

D.: Partial surrender - well - can it undo destiny?

M.: Oh, yes! It can.

D.: Is not destiny due to past karma?

M.: If one is surrendered to God, God will look to it.

D.: This being God's dispensation, how does God undo it?

M.: All are in Him only.

D.: How is God to be seen?

M.: Within. If the mind is turned inward *God* manifests as inner consciousness.

D.: God is in all - in all the objects we see around us. They say we should see God in all of them.

M.: God is in all and in the seer. Where else can God be seen? He cannot be found outside. He *should* be felt within. To see the objects, mind is necessary. To conceive God in them is a mental operation. But that is not real. The consciousness within, purged of the mind, is felt as God.

D.: There are, say, beautiful colours. It is a pleasure to watch them. We can see God in them.

M.: They are all mental conceptions.

D.: There are more than colours. I *mentioned* colours only as an example.

M.: They are also similarly mental.

D.: There is the body also - the senses and the mind. The soul makes use of all these for knowing things.

M.: The objects or feelings or thoughts are all mental conceptions. The mind rises after the rise of the I-thought or the ego. Wherefrom does the ego rise? From the abstract consciousness or Pure intelligence.

D.: Is it the soul?

M.: Soul, mind or ego are mere words. There are no entities of the kind. Consciousness is the only truth.

D.: Then that consciousness cannot give any pleasure.

M.: Its nature is Bliss. Bliss alone is. There is no enjoyer to enjoy pleasure. Enjoyer and joy - both merge in it.

D.: There are pleasure and pain in ordinary life. Should we not remain with only pleasure?

M.: Pleasure consists in turning and keeping the mind within; pain in sending it outward. There is only pleasure. Absence of pleasure is called pain. One's nature is pleasure - Bliss (*Ananda*)

D.: Is it the soul?

M.: Soul and God are only mental conceptions.

D.: Is God only a mental conception?

M.: Yes. Do you think of God in sleep?

D.: But sleep is a state of dullness.

M.: If God be real He must remain always. You remain in sleep and in wakefulness - just the same. If God be as true as your Self, God must be in sleep as well as the Self. This thought of God arises only in the wakeful state. Who thinks now?

D.: I think.

M.: Who is this 'I'? Who says it? Is it the body?

D.: The body speaks.

M.: The body does not speak. If so, did it speak in sleep? Who is this I?

D.: I within the body.

M.: Are you within the body or without?

D.: I am certainly within the body.

M.: Do you know it to be so in your sleep?

D.: I remain in my body in sleep also.

M.: Are you aware of being within the body in sleep?

D.: Sleep is a state of dullness.

M.: The fact is, you are neither within nor without. Sleep is the natural state of being.

D.: Then sleep must be a better state than this.

M.: There is no superior or inferior state. In sleep, in dream and in the wakeful state you are just the same. Sleep is a state of happiness; there is no misery. The sense of want, of pain, etc., arises only in the

wakeful state. What is the change that has taken place? You are the same in both, but there is difference in happiness. Why? Because the mind has risen now. This mind rises after the 'I-thought'. The thought arises from consciousness. If one abides in it, one is always happy.

D.: The sleep state is the state when the mind is quiet. I consider it a worse state.

M.: If that were so, why do all desire sleep?

D.: It is the body when tired that goes to sleep.

M.: Does the body sleep?

D.: Yes. It is the condition in which the wear and tear of the body is repaired.

M.: Let it be so. But does the body itself sleep or wake up? You yourself said shortly before that the mind is quiet in sleep. The three states are of the mind.

D.: Are they not states of the soul functioning through the senses, etc.?

M.: They are not of the soul or of the body. The soul remains always uncontaminated. It is the substratum running through all these three states. Wakefulness passes off, I am; the dream state passes off, I am; the sleep state passes off, I am. They repeat themselves, and yet I am. They are like pictures moving on the screen in a cinema show. They do not affect the screen. Similarly also, I remain unaffected although these states pass off. If it is of the body, are you aware of the body in sleep?

D.: No.

M.: Without knowing the body to be there how can the body be said to be in sleep?

D.: Because it is still found after waking up.

M.: The sense of body is a thought; the thought is of the mind, the mind rises after the 'I-thought', the 'I-thought' is the root thought. If that is held, the other thoughts will disappear. There will then be no body, no mind, not even the ego.

D.: What will remain then?

M.: The Self in its purity.

D.: How can the mind be made to vanish?

M.: No attempt is made to destroy it. To think or wish it is itself a thought. If the thinker is sought, the thoughts will disappear.

D.: Will they disappear of themselves? It looks so difficult.

M.: They will disappear because they are unreal. The idea of difficulty is itself an obstacle to realisation. It must be overcome. To remain as the Self is not difficult.

D.: It looks easy to think of God in the external world, whereas it looks difficult to remain without thoughts.

M.: That is absurd; to look at other things is easy and to look within is difficult! It must be contrariwise.

D.: But I do not understand. It is difficult.

M.: This thought of difficulty is the chief obstacle. A little practice will make you think differently.

D.: What is the practice?

M.: To find out the source of 'I'.

D.: That was the state before one's birth.

M.: Why should one think of birth and death? Are you really born? The rising of the mind is called birth. After mind the body-thought arises and the body is seen; then the thought of birth, the state before birth, death, the state after death - all these are only of the mind. Whose is the birth?

D.: Am I not now born?

M.: So long as the body is considered, birth is real. But the body is not 'I'. The Self is not born nor does it die. There is nothing new. The Sages see everything in and of the Self. There is no diversity in it. Therefore there is neither birth nor death.

D.: If sleep be such a good state, why does not one like to be always in it?

M.: One is always only in sleep. The present waking state is no more than a dream. Dream can take place only in sleep. Sleep is underlying these three states. Manifestation of these three states is again a dream, which is in its turn another sleep. In this way these states of dream and sleep are endless.

Similar to these states, birth and death also are dreams in a sleep. Really speaking, there are no birth and death.

8th September, 1936

Talk 245.

Misses Gulbai and Shirinbai Byramjee, two Parsi ladies, were asking questions round one central point. All their questions amounted to one.

"I understand that the Self is beyond the ego. My knowledge is theoretical and not practical. How shall I gain practical realisation of the Self?"

M.: Realisation is nothing to be got afresh. It is already there. All that is necessary is to be rid of the thought: "I have not realised."

D.: Then one need not attempt it.

M.: No. Stillness of mind or peace is realisation. There is no moment when the Self is not.

So long as there is doubt or the feeling of non-realisation, attempt must be made to rid oneself of these thoughts.

The thoughts are due to identification of the Self with the non-self. When the non-self disappears the Self alone remains. To make room anywhere it is enough that things are removed from there. Room is not brought in afresh. Nay, more - room is there even in cramping.

Absence of thoughts does not mean a blank. There must be one to know the blank. Knowledge and ignorance are of the mind. They are born of duality. But the Self is beyond knowledge and ignorance. It is light itself. There is no necessity to see the Self with another Self. There are no two selves. What is not Self is non-self. The non-self cannot see the Self. The Self has no sight or hearing. It lies beyond these - *all alone*, as pure consciousness.

A woman, with her necklace round her neck, imagines that it has been lost and goes about searching for it, until she is reminded of it by a friend; she has created her own sense of loss, her own anxiety of search and then her own pleasure of recovery. Similarly the Self is all along there, whether you search for it or not. Again just as the woman feels as if the lost necklace has been regained, so also the removal of ignorance and the cessation of false identification reveal the Self which is always present - here and now. This is called realisation. It is not new. It amounts to elimination of ignorance and nothing more.

Blankness is the evil result of searching the mind. The mind must be cut off, root and branch. See who the thinker is, who the seeker is. Abide as the thinker, the seeker. All thoughts will disappear.

D.: Then there will be the ego - the thinker.

M.: That ego is pure Ego purged of thoughts. It is the same as the Self. So long as false identification persists doubts will persist, questions will arise, there will be no end of them. Doubts will cease only when the non-self is put an end to. That will result in realisation of the Self. There will remain no other there to doubt or ask. All these doubts should be solved within oneself. No amount of words will satisfy. Hold the thinker. Only when the thinker is not held do objects appear outside or doubts arise in the mind.

Talk 246.

Language is only a medium for communicating one's thoughts to another. It is called in only after thoughts arise; other thoughts arise after the 'I-thought' rises; the 'I-thought' is the root of all conversation. When one remains without thinking one understands another by means of the universal language of silence.

Silence is ever-speaking; it is a perennial flow of language; it is interrupted by speaking. These words obstruct that mute language. There is electricity flowing in a wire. With resistance to its passage, it glows as a lamp or revolves as a fan. In the wire it remains as electric energy. Similarly also, silence is the eternal flow of language, obstructed by words.

What one fails to know by conversation extending to several years can be known in a trice in Silence, or in front of Silence - *e.g.*, Dakshinamurti, and his four disciples.

That is the highest and most effective language.

Talk 247.

There arose a doubt if 'I-I' consciousness be the same as *nirvikalpa samadhi* or anything anterior to it.

Sri Bhagavan said that the tiny hole in the Heart remains always closed, but it is opened by *vichara* with the result that 'I-I' consciousness shines forth. It is the same as *samadhi*.

D.: What is the difference between fainting and sleep?

M.: Sleep is sudden and overpowers the person forcibly. A faint is slower and there is a tingle of resistance kept up. Realisation is possible in a faint and impossible in sleep.

D.: What is the state just before death?

M.: When a person gasps for breath it indicates that the person is unconscious of this body; another body has been held and the person swings to and fro. While gasping there is a more violent gasp at intervals and that indicates the oscillation between the two bodies due to the present attachment not having been completely snapped. I noticed it in the case of my mother and of Palaniswami.

D.: Does the new body involved in that state represent the next re-incarnation of the person?

M.: Yes. While gasping the person is in something like a dream, not aware of the present environment.

(It must be remembered that Sri Bhagavan had been with His mother from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. until she passed away. He was all along holding her head with one hand, the other hand placed on her bosom. What does it signify? He Himself said later that there was a struggle between Himself and His mother until her spirit reached the Heart.

Evidently the soul passes through a series of subtle experiences, and Sri Bhagavan's touch generates a current which turns the soul back from its wandering into the Heart.

The *samskaras*, however, persist and a struggle is kept up between the spiritual force set up by His touch and the innate *samskaras*, until the latter are entirely destroyed and the soul is led into the Heart to rest in eternal Peace, which is the same as Liberation.

Its entry into the Heart is signified by a peculiar sensation perceptible to the Mahatma - similar to the tinkling of a bell.

When Maharshi attended on Palaniswami on his death-bed, He took away His hand after the above signal. But Palaniswami's eyes opened immediately, signifying that the spirit had escaped through them, thereby indicating a higher rebirth, but not

Liberation. Having once noticed it with Palaniswami, Maharshi continued touching His mother for a few minutes longer - even after the signal of the soul passing into the Heart - and thus ensured her Liberation. This was confirmed by the look of perfect peace and composure on her features).

15th September, 1936

Talk 248.

Sri Bhagavan said: The *jnani* says, "I am the body"; The *ajnani* says, "I am the body"; what is the difference? 'I am' is the truth. The body is the limitation. The *ajnani* limits the 'I' to the body. 'I' remains independent of the body in sleep. The same 'I' is now in the wakeful state. Though imagined to be within the body, 'I' is without the body. The wrong notion is not 'I am the body.' 'I' says so. The body is insentient and cannot say so. The mistake lies in thinking that 'I' is what 'I' is not. 'I' is not insentient. 'I' cannot be the inert body. The body's movements are confounded with 'I' and misery is the result. Whether the body works or not, 'I' remains free and happy. The *ajnani's* 'I' is the body only. That is the whole error. The *jnani's* 'I' includes the body and everything else. Clearly some intermediate entity arises and gives rise to the confusion.

Mr. Vaidyanatha Iyer, a lawyer, asked: If the *jnani* says "I am the body," what happens to him in death?

M.: He does not identify himself with the body even now.

D.: But you said just before that the *jnani* says "I am the body."

M.: Yes. His 'I' includes the body. For there cannot be anything apart from 'I' for him. If the body falls away there is no loss for the 'I'. 'I' remains the same. If the body feels dead let it raise the question. Being inert it cannot. 'I' never dies and does not ask the question. Who then dies? Who asks questions?

D.: For whom are all the *sastras* then? They cannot be for the real 'I'. They must be for the unreal 'I'. The real one does not require them. It is strange that the unreal should have so many *sastras* for him.

M.: Yes. Quite so. Death is only a thought and nothing more. He who thinks raises troubles. Let the thinker tell us what happens to him

in death. The real 'I' is silent. One should not think 'I am this - I am not that'. To say 'this or that' is wrong. They are also limitations. Only 'I am' is the truth. Silence is 'I'. If one thinks 'I am this', another thinks 'I am this' and so on, there is a clash of thoughts and so many religions are the result. The truth remains as it is, not affected by any statements, conflicting or otherwise.

D.: What is death? Is it not the falling away of the body?

M.: Do you not desire it in sleep? What goes wrong then?

D.: But I know I shall wake up.

M.: Yes - thought again. There is the preceding thought 'I shall wake up'. Thoughts rule the life. Freedom from thoughts is one's true nature - Bliss.

24th September, 1936

Talk 249.

M.: Ignorance - *ajnana* - is of two kinds:

(1) Forgetfulness of the Self.

(2) Obstruction to the knowledge of the Self.

Aids are meant for eradicating thoughts; these thoughts are the re-manifestations of predispositions remaining in seed-form; they give rise to diversity from which all troubles arise. These aids are: hearing the truth from the master (*sravana*), etc.

The effects of *sravana* may be immediate and the disciple realises the truth all at once. This can happen only for the well-advanced disciple.

Otherwise, the disciple feels that he is unable to realise the truth, even after repeatedly hearing it. What is it due to? Impurities in his mind: ignorance, doubt and wrong identity are the obstacles to be removed.

(a) To remove ignorance completely, he has to hear the truth repeatedly, until his knowledge of the subject-matter becomes perfect;

(b) to remove doubts, he must reflect on what he has heard; ultimately his knowledge will be free from doubts of any kind;

(c) to remove the wrong identity of the Self with the non-self (such as the body, the senses, the mind or the intellect) his mind must become one-pointed.

All these things accomplished, the obstacles are at an end and *samadhi* results, that is, Peace reigns.

Some say that one should never cease to engage in hearing, reflection and one-pointedness. These are not fulfilled by reading books, but only by continued practice to keep the mind withdrawn.

The aspirant may be *kritopasaka* or *akritopasaka*. The former is fit to realise the Self, even with the slightest stimulus: only some little doubt stands in his way, it is easily removed if he hears the truth once from the Master. Immediately he gains the *samadhi* state. It is presumed that he had already completed *sravana*, reflection, etc. in previous births, they are no more necessary for him.

For the other all these aids are necessary; for him doubts crop up even after repeated hearing; therefore he must not give up aids until he gains the *samadhi* state.

Sravana removes the illusion of the Self being one with the body, etc. Reflection makes it clear that Knowledge is Self. One-pointedness reveals the Self as being Infinite and Blissful.

27th September, 1936

Talk 250.

A certain devotee asked Maharshi about some disagreeable statements made by a certain man well-known to Maharshi.

He said, "I permit him to do so. I have permitted him already. Let him do so even more. Let others follow suit. Only let them leave me alone. If because of these reports no one comes to me, I shall consider it a great service done to me. Moreover, if he cares to publish books containing scandals of me, and if he makes money by their sale, it is really good. Such books will sell even more quickly and in larger numbers than others. Look at Miss Mayo's book. Why should he not also do it? He is doing me a very good turn." Saying so, He laughed.

There was again a reference to the same subject when Maharshi was alone. The villifier seems to be getting into hot water on account of his inconsiderate action. When it was mentioned, Maharshi seemed to be concerned for the man's safety, and He said with obvious sympathy: "Even if allowed to have his own way for earning money, the man gets into trouble. If he availed himself of our indulgence and acted sensibly, he could have got on well. But what can we do?"

Talk 251.

An aristocratic lady looking very intelligent, though pensive, asked: "We had heard of you, Maharajji, as the kindest and noblest soul. We had long desired to have your *darsan*. I came here once before, on the 14th of last month, but could not remain in your holy presence as long as I wished. Being a woman and also young, I could not stand the people around, and so broke away hurriedly after asking one or two simple questions. There are no holy men like you in our part of the country. I am happy as I have everything I want. But I do not have that peace of mind which brings happiness. I now come here seeking your blessing so that I may gain it."

M.: Bhakti fulfils your desire.

D.: I want to know how I can gain that peace of mind. Kindly be pleased to advise me.

M.: Yes - devotion and surrender.

D.: Am I worthy of being a devotee?

M.: Everyone can be a devotee. Spiritual fare is common to all and never denied to anyone - be the person old or young, male or female.

D.: That is exactly what I am anxious to know. I am young and a *grihini* (housewife). There are duties of *grihastha dharma* (the household). Is devotion consistent with such a position?

M.: Certainly. What are you? You are not the body. You are Pure Consciousness. *Grihastha dharma* and the world are only phenomena appearing on that Pure Consciousness. It remains unaffected. What prevents you from being your own Self?

D.: Yes I am already aware of the line of teaching of Maharshi. It is the quest for the Self. But my doubt persists if such quest is compatible with *grihastha* life.

M.: The Self is always there. It is you. There is nothing but you. Nothing can be apart from you. The question of compatibility or otherwise does not arise.

D.: I shall be more definite. Though a stranger, I am obliged to confess the cause of my anxiety. I am blessed with children. A boy - a good *brahmachari* - passed away in February. I was grief-stricken. I was disgusted with this life. I want to devote myself to spiritual life. But my duties as a *grihini* do not permit me to lead a retired life. Hence my doubt.

M.: Retirement means abidance in the Self. Nothing more. It is not leaving one set of surroundings and getting entangled in another set, nor even leaving the concrete world and becoming involved in a mental world.

The birth of the son, his death, etc., are seen in the Self only.

Recall the state of sleep. Were you aware of anything happening? If the son or the world be real, should they not be present with you in sleep? You cannot deny your existence in sleep. Nor can you deny you were happy then. You are the same person now speaking and raising doubts. You are not happy, according to you. But you were happy in sleep. What has transpired in the meantime that happiness of sleep has broken down? It is the rise of ego. That is the new arrival in the *jagrat* state. There was no ego in sleep. The birth of the ego is called the birth of the person. There is no other kind of birth. Whatever is born is bound to die. Kill the ego: there is no fear of recurring death for what is once dead. The Self remains even after the death of the ego. That is Bliss - that is Immortality.

D.: How is that to be done?

M.: See for whom these doubts exist. Who is the doubter? Who is the thinker? That is the ego. Hold it. The other thoughts will die away. The ego is left pure; see where from the ego arises. That is pure consciousness.

D.: It seems difficult. May we proceed by *bhakti marga*?

M.: It is according to individual temperament and equipment. *Bhakti* is the same as *vichara*.

D.: I mean meditation, etc.

M.: Yes. Meditation is on a form. That will drive away other thoughts. The one thought of God will dominate others. That is concentration. The object of meditation is thus the same as that of *vichara*.

D.: Do we not see God in concrete form?

M.: Yes. God is seen in the mind. The concrete form may be seen. Still it is only in the devotee's mind. The form and appearance of God-manifestation are determined by the mind of the devotee. But it is not the finality. There is the sense of duality.

It is like a dream-vision. After God is perceived, *vichara* commences. That ends in Realisation of the Self. *Vichara* is the ultimate route.

Of course, a few find *vichara* practicable. Others find *bhakti* easier.

D.: Did not Mr. Brunton find you in London? Was it only a dream?

M.: Yes. He had the vision. He saw me in his mind.

D.: Did he not see this concrete form?

M.: Yes, still in his mind.

D.: How shall I reach the Self?

M.: There is no reaching the Self. If the Self were to be reached, it would mean that the Self is not now and here, but that it should be got anew. What is got afresh, will also be lost. So it will be impermanent. What is not permanent is not worth striving for. So I say, the Self is not reached. You are the Self. You are already That. The fact is that you are ignorant of your blissful state. Ignorance supervenes and draws a veil over the pure Bliss. Attempts are directed only to remove this ignorance. This ignorance consists in wrong knowledge. The wrong knowledge consists in the false identification of the Self with the body, the mind, etc. This false identity must go and there remains the Self.

D.: How is that to happen?

M.: By enquiry into the Self.

D.: It is difficult. Can I realise the Self, Maharaj? Kindly tell me. It looks so difficult.

M.: You are already the Self. Therefore realisation is common to everyone. Realisation knows no difference in the aspirants. This

very doubt, "Can I realise?" or the feeling, "I have not realised" are the obstacles. Be free from these also.

D.: But there should be the experience. Unless I have the experience how can I be free from these afflicting thoughts?

M.: These are also in the mind. They are there because you have identified yourself with the body. If this false identity drops away, ignorance vanishes and Truth is revealed.

D.: Yes, I feel it difficult. There are disciples of Bhagavan who have had His Grace and realised without any considerable difficulty. I too wish to have that Grace. Being a woman and living at a long distance I cannot avail myself of Maharshi's holy company as much as I would wish and as often as I would. Possibly I may not be able to return. I request Bhagavan's Grace. When I am back in my place, I want to remember Bhagavan. May Bhagavan be pleased to grant my prayer!

M.: Where are you going? You are not going anywhere. Even supposing you are the body, has your body come from Lucknow to Tiruvannamalai? You had simply sat in the car and one conveyance or another had moved; and finally you say that you have come here. The fact is that you are not the body. The Self does not move. The world moves in it. You are only what you are. There is no change in you. So then even after what looks like departure from here, you are here and there and everywhere. These scenes shift.

As for Grace - Grace is within you. If it is external it is useless. Grace is the Self. You are never out of its operation. Grace is always there.

D.: I mean that when I remember your form, my mind should be strengthened and that response should come from your side too. I should not be left to my individual efforts which are after all only weak.

M.: Grace is the Self. I have already said, "If you remember Bhagavan, you are prompted to do so by the Self." Is not Grace already there? Is there a moment when Grace is not operating in you? Your remembrance is the forerunner of Grace. That is the response, that is the stimulus, that is the Self and that is Grace.

There is no cause for anxiety.

D.: Can I engage in spiritual practice, even remaining in *samsara*?

M.: Yes, certainly. One ought to do so.

D.: Is not *samsara* a hindrance? Do not all the holy books advocate renunciation?

M.: Samsara is only in your mind. The world does not speak out, saying 'I am the world'. Otherwise, it must be ever there - not excluding your sleep. Since it is not in sleep it is impermanent. Being impermanent it has no stamina. Having no stamina it is easily subdued by the Self. The Self alone is permanent. Renunciation is non-identification of the Self with the non-self. On the disappearance of ignorance the non-self ceases to exist. That is true renunciation.

D.: Why did you then leave your home in your youth?

M.: That is my *prarabdha* (fate). One's course of conduct in this life is determined by one's *prarabdha*. My *prarabdha* is this way. Your *prarabdha* is that way.

D.: Should I not also renounce?

M.: If that had been your *prarabdha*, the question would not have arisen.

D.: I should therefore remain in the world and engage in spiritual practice. Well, can I get realisation in this life?

M.: This has been already answered. You are always the Self. Earnest efforts never fail. Success is bound to result.

D.: Will Maharshi be pleased to extend Grace to me also!

Maharshi smiled and said "Um! Um!" With blessings and salutation, the interview came to a close and the party departed directly.

30th September, 1936

Talk 252.

D.: Sri Ramakrishna touched Vivekananda and the latter realised Bliss. Is it possible?

M.: Sri Ramakrishna did not touch all for that purpose. He did not create Atma. He did not create Realisation. Vivekananda was ripe. He was anxious to realise. He must have completed the preliminary course in his past births. Such is possible for ripe persons only.

D.: Can the same miracle be worked for all?

M.: If they are fit. Fitness is the point. A strong man controls the weaker man. A strong mind controls the weaker mind. That was what happened in the case cited. The effect was only temporary. Why did Vivekananda not sit quiet? Why did he wander about after such a miracle? Because the effect was only temporary.

D.: How is the mind to dive into the Heart?

M.: The mind now sees itself diversified as the universe. If the diversity is not manifest it remains in its own essence, that is the Heart. Entering the Heart means remaining without distractions.

The Heart is the only Reality. The mind is only a transient phase. To remain as one's Self is to enter the Heart.

Because a man identifies himself with the body he sees the world separate from him. This wrong identification arises because he has lost his moorings and has swerved from his original state. He is now advised to give up all these false ideas, to trace back his source and remain as the Self. In that state, there are no differences. No questions will arise.

All the *sastras* are meant only to make the man retrace his steps to the original source. He need not gain anything new. He must only give up his false ideas and useless accretions. Instead of doing it he tries to catch hold of something strange and mysterious because he believes that his happiness lies elsewhere. That is the mistake.

If one remains as the Self there is bliss. Probably he thinks that being quiet does not bring about the state of bliss. That is due to his ignorance. The only practice is to find out "to whom these questions arise."

D.: How to control lust, anger, etc.?

M.: Whose are these passions? Find out. If you remain as the Self, there will be found to be nothing apart from the Self. Then there will be no need to control, etc.

D.: If a person whom we love dies, grief results. Shall we avoid such grief by either loving all alike or by not loving at all?

M.: If one dies, it results in grief for the other who lives. The way to get rid of grief *is not to live*. Kill the one who grieves. Who will remain then to suffer? The ego must die. That is the only way.

The two alternatives amount to the same state. When all have become the one Self, who is there to be loved or hated?

D.: What is the Sun *marga*? What is the Moon *marga*? Which of them is easier?

M.: Ravi marga (Sun marga) is *jnana*. Moon *marga* is Yoga. They think that after purifying the 72,000 *nadis* in the body, *sushumna* is entered and the mind passes up to the *sahasrara* and there is nectar trickling.

These are all mental concepts. The man is already overwhelmed by world concepts. Other concepts are now added in the shape of this Yoga. The object of all these is to rid the man of concepts and to make him inhere as the pure Self - *i.e.*, absolute consciousness, bereft of thoughts! Why not go straight to it? Why add new encumbrances to the already existing ones?

1st October, 1936

Talk 253.

Mr. F. G. Pearce, Principal, Scindia School, Gwalior: Bhagavan has stated [in *Sad Vidya Anubandham* (Supplement) sloka 36]: "The illiterates are certainly better off than the literates whose egos are not destroyed by the quest of the self." This being so, could Bhagavan advise a school master (who feels this to be true) how to carry on education in such a way that the desire for literacy and intellectual knowledge may not obscure the more important search for the Self? Are the two incompatible? If they are not, then from what age, and by what means, can young people best be stimulated towards the search for the Real Truth within?

M.: Pride of learning and desire for appreciation are condemned and not learning itself. Learning leading to search for Truth and humility is good.

[A request from the same seeker: The above questioner has spent two very precious days in physical proximity to Bhagavan Maharshi (whom he has not seen since - 17 years ago - he visited Him for a few minutes on the hillside). His duties now compel him to take his body far away again to the north, and it may be years before he can return.

He humbly requests Bhagavan to make a strong link with him, and to continue to help him with His grace, in the quest of the Self.

Maharshi had a gentle smile for this.]

Talk 254.

Mr. Duncan Greenlees quoted a few verses from *Srimad Bhagavatam* to the following effect:

"See the Self in yourself like the pure ether in all beings, in and out."

"Unashamed, fall prostrate before even an outcast, a cow or an ass."

"So long as 'I' am not perceived in all, worship all with body and mind."

"With right knowledge see all as Brahma. This once clear, all doubts are at an end and you will remain withdrawn in the Self."

He then raised the following questions:

D.: Is this a True Path to the realisation of the, One Self? Is it not easier for some thus to practise seeing Bhagavan in whatever meets the mind than to seek the Super-Mental through the mental inquiry "Who am I?"

M.: Yes. When you see God in all, do you think of God or do you not? You should certainly keep God in your mind for seeing God all round you. Keeping God in your mind becomes *dhyana*. *Dhyana* is the stage before realisation. Realisation is in the Self only. *Dhyana* must precede it. Whether you make *dhyana* of God or of Self, it is immaterial. The goal is the same.

But you cannot escape the Self. You want to see God in all, but not in yourself? If all are God, are you not included in that all? Yourself being God, is it a wonder that all are God? There must be a seer and thinker for even the practice. Who is he?

D.: Through poetry, music, *japa, bhajan*, beautiful landscapes, reading the lives of spiritual heroes, etc., one sometimes experiences a true sense of all-unity. Is that feeling of deep blissful quiet (wherein the personal self has no place) the "entering into the heart" whereof Bhagavan speaks? Will practice of that lead to a deeper *samadhi*, and so ultimately to a full vision of the Real?

M.: Again, there is happiness at agreeable sights, etc. It is the happiness inherent in the Self. That happiness is not alien and after. You are diving into the Pure Self on occasions which you consider pleasurable. That diving reveals the Self-existent Bliss. But the

association of ideas is responsible for foisting this bliss on to other things or happenings. In fact, it is within you. On these occasions you are plunging into the Self, though unconsciously. If you do so consciously you call it Realisation. I want you to dive consciously into the Self, *i.e*., into the Heart.

Talk 255.

D.: If the Self be always realised we should only keep still. Is that so?

M.: If you can keep still without engaging in any other pursuits, it is very good. If that cannot be done, where is the use of being quiet so far as realisation is concerned? So long as one is obliged to be active, let him not give up the attempt to realise the Self.

Talk 256.

A question was asked regarding the position of one whose *jnana* is weak in the scheme of things. The doubt was if that *manda jnani* had stopped short of *kevala nirvikalpa*.

M.: Kevala nirvikalpa happens even in the *tanumanasi* stage (of attenuated mind).

D.: The middling and superior *jnanis* are said to be *jivanmuktas*. *Kevala nirvikalpa* is in *tanumanasa*. Where does one whose *jnana* is weak fit in?

M.: He comes in *sattvapatti* (realisation) - whereas the middling and the superior ones come in *asamsakti* and *padarthabhavini* respectively. This division as dull, middling, and superior is according to the momentum of *prarabdha*. If it is strong he is weak; if it is middling he is middling too; if *prarabdha* is weak he is superior; if it is very weak he is in *turyaga*.

There is no difference in the *samadhi* state or the *jnana* of the *jnanis*. The classification is only from the standpoint of the observer.

D.: Is *tanumanasi* the same as *mumukshutva*?

M.: No. The six qualities, discrimination, dispassion and *mumukshutva*, etc., precede *subhechcha*. The first stage follows *mumukshutva*, then comes *vicharana* (search), then the tenuous mind. Direct perception is in *sattvapatti* (realisation).

There is no need to discuss similar points. *Jivanmukti* and *Videhamukti* are differently described by different authorities; *Videhamukti* is sometimes said to occur even when the man is seen with a body. The fact is that *mukti* is another name for *Aham* ('I').

The Seven *Jnana bhumikas* (stages of knowledge) are: (1) *Subhechcha* (desire for enlightenment); (2) *Vicharana* (hearing and reflection); (3) *Tanumanasi* (tenuous mind); (4) *Sattvapatti* (Self-Realisation); (5) *Asamsakti* (non-attachment); (6) *Padarthabhavani* (absolute non-perception of objects); (7) *Turyaga* (beyond words).

Those who have attained the last four *Bhumikas* are respectively called *Brahmavit, Brahmavidvara, Brahmavidvarya* and *Brahmavidvarishtha*.

Talk 257.

D.: A certain young man from Dindigul spoke to Sri Bhagavan, saying that he had learnt by his stay for a few days; that all that he need do was to enquire, "Who am I?" He wanted to know if any discipline was to be observed and started with the question: "Where should I do the enquiry?" meaning if he should do it in Guru sannidhi (the presence of the Master).

M.: The enquiry should be from where the 'I' is.

D.: People labour for gaining the *summum bonum* of life. I think that they are not on the right track. Sri Bhagavan has made considerable *tapas* and achieved the goal. Sri Bhagavan is also desirous that all should reach the goal and willing to help them to that end. His vicarious *tapas* must enable others to reach the goal rather easily. They need not undergo all the hardships which Sri Bhagavan has already undergone. Their way has been made easy for them by Sri Bhagavan. Am I not right?

Maharshi smiled and said: If that were so everyone would easily reach the goal, but each one must work for himself.

Talk 258.

D.: A young man from Mysore gave a written slip to Sri Bhagavan and waited for an answer. He had asked Sri Bhagavan to say where other Mahatmas could be found whom he might approach for guidance. He confessed that he had left his home without informing

his elders in order that he might seek God through Mahatmas. True, he knew nothing of God or of search for Him. Therefore he desired to see Mahatmas.

Sri Bhagavan simply returned the note saying: I must answer any and every question. Unless I do so I am not great.

The boy tore away the slip and wrote another, which said, "You are kind to squirrels and hares. You fondle them when they struggle to run away from you. Yet you are indifferent to human beings. For instance, I have left my home and am waiting here for a fortnight. I have had no food some days. I am struggling. Still you do not care for me."

M.: Look here. I am not endowed with television. God has not bestowed that gift on me. What shall I do? How can I answer your questions? People call me Maharshi and treat me like this. But I do not see myself as a Maharshi. On the other hand everyone is a Maharshi to me. It is good that you in this early age are attempting to seek God. Concentrate on Him. Do your work without desiring the fruits thereof. That is all that you should do.

Talk 259.

Nada, Bindu and *Kala* correspond to prana, mind and intellect.

Isvara is beyond *nada* (sound).

Nada, jyoti (light), etc., are mentioned in Yoga literature. But God is beyond these.

The circulation of blood, respiration of air, and other functions of the body are bound to produce sound. That sound is involuntary and continuous. That is *nada*.

Talk 260.

An extract from "A Hermit in the Himalayas" was found in the *Sunday Times*. It related to recapitulation of past incarnations. In it Paul Brunton has mentioned the Buddhist methods of gaining that faculty. Sri Bhagavan said, "There is a class of people who want to know all about their future or their past. They ignore the present. The load from the past forms the present misery. The attempt to recall the past is mere waste of time."

Talk 261.

There was a reference to reincarnation. Reincarnation of Shanti Devi tallies with the human standards of time. Whereas the latest case reported of a boy of seven is different. The boy is seven years now. He recalls his past births. Enquiries go to show that the previous body was given up 10 months ago.

The question arises how the matter stood for six years and two months previous to the death of the former body. Did the soul occupy two bodies at the same time?

Sri Bhagavan pointed out that the seven years is according to the boy; ten months is according to the observer. The difference is due to these two different *upadhis*. The boy's experience extending to seven years has been calculated by the observer to cover only 10 months of his own time.

Sri Bhagavan again referred to Lila's story in *Yoga Vasishta*.

Talk 262.

Dr. Syed, a Muslim Professor, is now here. A sceptic friend of his had confronted him with the question: "What miracle does your Maharshi work?" He had replied that the ordinary people being no better than animals are made men and that we being only His children are endowed with strength by Maharshi. He desired to know if he was right in replying to him. "Refreshing Peace within is the highest miracle. Maharshi possesses it."

"What is that to us?" the other man asked. I replied "The same Peace is bestowed on all visitors to be shared by them. Mr. Paul Brunton has mentioned it in his book. Everyone feels it every day in Maharshi's presence."

The whole conversation was mentioned to Sri Bhagavan with the following addition:

Parasurama has said that he felt some refreshing peace within when he met Samvritta on the way. So he made him out to be a great saint. Is not such peace the sole criterion of a Mahatma's Presence? Is there anything else?

Sri Bhagavan said: A Madhva saint Tatvaroyar had composed a *bharani* on his master Swarupanand. Pandits objected to the composition, saying that it was reserved to such as have killed more than a thousand elephants in battle, whereas Swarupanand was an idle man sitting somewhere unknown to people and he did not deserve that panegyric.

Tatvaroyar asked them all to assemble before his master so that they might see for themselves if he could slay one thousand elephants at a time. They did so. As soon as they appeared they were struck dumb and remained in beatific peace for a few days without the least movement. When they regained their senses, they saluted both the master and the disciple, saying that they were more than satisfied. Swarupanand excelled the warriors in that he could subdue the egos, which is a much more formidable task than slaying a thousand elephants.

Maharshi said that the moral was clear. Peace is the sole criterion of a Mahatma's Presence.

20th October, 1936

Talk 263.

Dr. Syed: Sri Bhagavan says that the Heart is the Self. Psychology has it that malice, envy, jealousy and all passions have their seat in the heart. How are these two statements to be reconciled?

M.: The whole cosmos is contained in one pinhole in the Heart. These passions are part of the cosmos. They are *avidya* (ignorance).

D.: How did *avidya* arise?

M.: Avidya is like *Maya* [she who is not is *maya* (illusion)]. Similarly that which is not is ignorance. Therefore the question does not arise. Nevertheless, the question is asked. Then ask, "Whose is the *avidya*? *Avidya* is ignorance. It implies subject and object. Become the subject and there will be no object.

D.: What is *avidya*?

M.: Ignorance of Self. Who is ignorant of the Self? The self must be ignorant of Self. Are there two selves?

Talk 264.

D.: Does Bhagavan see the world as part and parcel of Himself? How does He see the world?

M.: The Self alone *is* and nothing else. However, it is differentiated owing to ignorance. Differentiation is threefold: (1) of the same kind: (2) of a different kind, and (3) as parts in itself. The world is not another self similar to the self. It is not different from the self; nor is it part of the self.

D.: Is not the world reflected on the Self?

M.: For reflection there must be an object and an image. But the Self does not admit of these differences.

D.: Does not then Bhagavan see the world?

M.: Whom do you mean by Bhagavan?

D.: A *jiva* advanced more than I.

M.: If you understand your *jiva* the other *jiva* is also understood.

D.: I do not want to discuss. I want to learn. Please instruct me.

M.: Because you desire to learn, discussion is unavoidable. Leave all this aside. Consider your sleep. Are you then aware of bondage or do you seek means for release? Are you then aware of the body itself? The sense of bondage is associated with the body. Otherwise there is no bondage, no material to bind with and no one to be bound. These appear, however, in your wakeful state. Consider to whom they appear.

D.: To the mind.

M.: Watch the mind. You must stand aloof from it. You are not the mind. And the Self will remain ever.

D.: Does Sri Bhagavan believe in evolution?

M.: Evolution must be from one state to another. When no differences are admitted, how can evolution arise?

D.: Why does Sri Krishna say, "After several rebirths the seeker gains knowledge and thus knows Me." There must be evolution from stage to stage.

M.: How does Bhagavad Gita begin?" Neither I was not nor you nor these chiefs, etc." "Neither it is born, nor does it die, etc." So there is no birth, no death, no present as you look at it. Reality

was, is, and will be. It is changeless. Later Arjuna asked Sri Krishna how he could have lived before *Aditya*. Then Krishna, seeing Arjuna was confounding Him with the gross body, spoke to him accordingly. The instruction is for the one who sees diversity. In reality there is no bondage nor *mukti* for himself or for others from the *jnani's* standpoint.

D.: Are all in liberation?

M.: Where is all? There is no liberation either. It could be only if there was bondage. There was really no bondage and so, it follows, there is no liberation.

D.: But to evolve through births, there must be practice, years of *abhyasa*.

M.: Abhyasa is only to prevent any disturbance to the inherent peace. There is no question of years. Prevent this thought at this moment. You are only in your natural state whether you make *abhyasa* or not.

Another man asked: Why do not all realise the Self in that case?

M.: It is the same question in another guise. Why do you raise this question? Inasmuch as you raise this question of *abhyasa* it shows you require *abhyasa*. Make it.

But to remain without questions or doubts is the natural state.

God created man; and man created God. They both are the originators of forms and names only. In fact, neither God nor man was created.

21st October, 1936

Talk 265.

The aristocratic lady again came after a few days, went straight to Bhagavan, saluted him and said:

"I came last time with my husband and children. I was thinking of their food and time was pressing. So I could not stay here as long as I would have wished. But I was later worried over the hurried nature of the visit. I have returned now to sit quiet and imbibe Sri Bhagavan's Grace. May He give me strength of mind!"

The hall was already kept clear of people. She sat on a crude carpet in front of Sri Bhagavan. Sri Bhagavan said smiling: "Yes. Silence is perpetual speaking. Ordinary speech hinders that heart-to-heart talk."

She agreed and sat quiet. Sri Bhagavan was sitting reclining on the sofa. His eyes were fixed in her direction with a gracious smile on His lips. Both remained silent and motionless for about an hour.

Prasad was distributed. The lady said: "Now I want to return. The river between Bangalore and this place is in floods. On my way here a bus was overturned in the floods. My car came later, and I saw the sad accident. Still I was not afraid to ford the river. My car came out safe. I would like to return in daytime.

"This time I shall not say 'is the last time I shall come' as I said on former occasions. I do not know, but it may be so. Yet Maharshi should give me strength of mind.

"I long for *bhakti*. I want more of this longing. Even realisation does not matter for me. Let me be strong in my longing."

M.: If the longing is there, Realisation will be forced on you even if you do not want it. *Subhechcha* is the doorway for realisation.

D.: Let it be so. But I am content with longing. Even when I am away from this place I must not relax in my devotion. May Sri Bhagavan give me the necessary strength. Such longing could only be through His Grace. I am personally too weak.

Again, when I was here on a previous occasion I asked several questions. But I could not follow Sri Bhagavan's answers. I thought I would not ask any more questions but only sit quiet in His Presence imbibing Grace which might be extended to me. So I do not pursue Maharshi with more questions this time. Only let me have His Grace.

M.: Your repeated visits to this place indicate the extension of Grace.

She was surprised and said: "I was going to ask Maharshi if He called me. For all of a sudden my husband told me this morning: 'There are two days free. If you want you may visit Maharshi and return.'

"I was very agreeably surprised and pleased. I took it to be a call from Maharshi."

She also expressed a desire to reside near Maharshi and asked for His blessings.

Maharshi said: A Higher Power is leading you. Be led by the same.

D.: But I am not aware of it. Please make me aware of it.

M.: The Higher Power knows what to do and how to do it. Trust it.

Talk 266.

The Muslim Professor asked: It is said that one should give up desire. But there are the needs of the body which are irrepressible. What is to be done?

M.: An aspirant must be equipped with three requisites: (1) *Ichcha*; (2) *Bhakti*; and (3) *Sraddha*. *Ichcha* means satisfaction of bodily wants without attachment to the body (such as hunger and thirst and evacuation). Unless it is done meditation cannot progress. *Bhakti* and *Sraddha* are already known.

D.: There are two kinds of desires - the baser and the nobler. Is it our duty to transmute the baser one to the nobler?

M.: Yes.

D.: Well, Bhagavan, you said there are three requisites of which *ichcha* is the satisfaction of natural wants without attachment to the body, etc. I take food three or four times a day and attend to bodily wants so much so that I am oppressed by the body. Is there a state when I shall be disembodied so that I might be free from the scourge of bodily wants?

M.: It is the attachments (*raga, dwesha*) which are injurious. The action is not bad in itself. There is no harm in eating three or four times. But only do not say, "I want this kind of food and not that kind" and so on.

Moreover you take those meals in twelve hours of wakeful state whereas you are not eating in the hours of sleep. Does sleep lead you to *mukti*? It is wrong to suppose that simple inactivity leads one to *mukti*.

D.: There are said to be *sadeha mukta* (liberated in body) and *videha mukta* (liberated without body).

M.: There is no liberation, and where are *muktas*?

D.: Do not Hindu *sastras* speak of *mukti*?

M.: Mukti is synonymous with the Self. *Jivan mukti* (liberation while alive) and *videha mukti* (liberation after the body falls) are all for the ignorant. The *jnani* is not conscious of *mukti* or *bandha* (bondage). Bondage, liberation and orders of *mukti* are all said for an *ajnani* in order that ignorance might be shaken off. There is only *mukti* and nothing else.

D.: It is all right from the standpoint of Bhagavan. But what about us?

M.: The difference 'He' and 'I' are the obstacles to *jnana*.

D.: But it cannot be denied that Bhagavan is of a high order whereas we are limited. Will Bhagavan make me one with Him?

M.: Were you aware of limitations in your sleep?

D.: I cannot bring down the state of my sleep in the present state and speak of it.

M.: You need not. These three states alternate before the unchanging Self. You can remember your state of sleep. That is your real state. There were no limitations then. After the rise of the 'I-thought' the limitations arose.

D.: How to attain the Self?

M.: Self is not to be attained because you are the Self.

D.: Yes. There is an unchanging Self and a changing one in me. There are two selves.

M.: The changefulness is mere thought. All thoughts arise after the arising of the 'I-thought'. See to whom the thoughts arise. Then you transcend them and they subside. This is to say, tracing the source of the 'I-thought', you realise the perfect 'I-I'. 'I' is the name of the Self.

D.: Shall I meditate on "I am Brahman" (*Aham Brahmasmi*)?

M.: The text is not meant for thinking "I am *Brahman*". *Aham* ('I') is known to everyone. *Brahman* abides as *Aham* in everyone. Find out the 'I'. The 'I' is already Brahman. You need not think so. Simply find out the 'I'.

D.: Is not discarding of the sheaths mentioned in the *sastras*?

M.: After the rise of the 'I-thought' there is the false identification of the 'I' with the body, the senses, the mind, etc. 'I' is wrongly associated with them and the true 'I' is lost sight of. In order to shift the pure 'I' from the contaminated 'I' this discarding is mentioned. But it does not mean exactly discarding of the non-self, but it means the finding of the real Self.

The real Self is the Infinite 'I-I', *i.e.*, 'I' is perfection. It is eternal. It has no origin and no end. The other 'I' is born and also dies. It is impermanent. See to whom are the changing thoughts. They will be found to arise after the 'I-thought'. Hold the 'I-thought'. They subside. Trace back the source of the 'I-thought'. The Self alone will remain.

D.: It is difficult to follow. I understand the theory. But what is the practice?

M.: The other methods are meant for those who cannot take to the investigation of the Self. Even to repeat *Aham Brahmasmi* or think of it, a doer is necessary. Who is it? It is 'I'. Be that 'I'. It is the direct method. The other methods also will ultimately lead everyone to this method of the investigation of the Self.

D.: I am aware of the 'I'. Yet my troubles are not ended.

M.: This 'I-thought' is not pure. It is contaminated with the association of the body and senses. See to whom the trouble is. It is to the 'I-thought'. Hold it. Then the other thoughts vanish.

D.: Yes. How to do it? That is the whole trouble.

M.: Think 'I' 'I' 'I' and hold to that one thought to the exclusion of all others.

23rd October, 1936

Talk 267.

While speaking of the animal companions in the hall Sri Bhagavan quoted a Tamil stanza by Avvai.

When the old lady was going along she heard on one occasion some one praising Kambar. She replied with a stanza which means:

"Each is great in its own way. What is Kambar's greatness when compared with a bird which builds its nest so fine, the worms which

give lac, the honey bee which builds the comb, the ants which build cities, and the spider its web?"

Bhagavan then began to describe their activities.

While living on the hill He had seen a hut built of stones and mud and roofed with thatch. There was constant trouble with white ants. The roof was pulled down and the walls demolished to get rid of the mud which harboured the ants. Sri Bhagavan saw that the hollows protected by stones were made into towns. These were skirted by walls plastered black, and there were roads to neighbouring cities which were also similarly skirted with black plastered walls. The roads were indicated by these walls. The interior of the town contained holes in which ants used to live. The whole wall was thus tenanted by white ants which ravaged the roofing materials above.

Sri Bhagavan had also watched a spider making its web and described it. It is seen in one place, then in another place, again in a third place. The fibre is fixed at all these points. The spider moves along it, descends, ascends and goes round and round and the web is finished. It is geometrical. The net is spread out in the morning and rolled up in the evening.

Similarly the wasps build their nests of lac (crude), and so on.

So then, each animal has got some remarkable instinct. Kambar's learning is not to be wondered at because it is God's will, as it is in the other cases.

Talk 268.

Dr. Syed: ,What is salvation? What did Christ mean by it?

M.: Salvation for whom? and from what?

D.: Salvation for the individual and from the sorrows and sufferings of the world.

M.: Whose are the sorrows, etc.?

D.: Of the mind.

M.: Are you the mind?

D.: I shall now explain how this question arose. I was meditating. I began to reflect on the Grace shown by Christ to some devotees who got salvation. I consider that Sri Bhagavan is similar. Is not salvation the result of similar Grace? That is what I mean by my questions.

M.: Yes. Right.

D.: The booklet *Who am I*? speaks of *swarupa drishti* (seeing the essence). Then there must be a seer and the seen. How can this be reconciled with the Ultimate Unity?

M.: Why do you ask for salvation, release from sorrow, etc.? He who asks for them sees them also.

The fact is this. *Drishti* (sight) is consciousness. It forms the subject and object. Can there be *drishti* apart from the Self? The Self is all - *drishti*, etc.

D.: How to discern the ego from the Perfect 'I-I'?

M.: That which rises and falls is the transient 'I'. That which has neither origin nor end is the permanent 'I-I' consciousness.

D.: Will continuous thought on the Self make the mind more and more refined so that it will not think of anything but the highest?

M.: There is the peaceful mind which is the supreme. When the same becomes restless, it is afflicted by thoughts. Mind is only the dynamic power (*sakti*) of the Self.

D.: Are the sheaths material and different from the Self?

M.: There is no difference between matter and spirit. Modern science admits that all matter is energy. Energy is power or force (*sakti*). Therefore all are resolved in Siva and *Sakti i.e.*, the Self and the Mind.

The *kosas* are mere appearances. There is no reality in them as such.

D.: How many hours a day should one devote to meditation?

M.: Your very nature is meditation.

D.: It will be so when ripe, but not now.

M.: You become conscious of it later. That does not mean that your nature is now different from meditation.

D.: What about practice?

M.: Meditation must always be practised.

D.: A Persian mystic says: "There is nothing but God." The Quran says: "God is immanent in all."

M.: There is no 'all', apart from God, for Him to pervade. He alone is.

D.: Is it morally right for a man to renounce his household duties when he once realises that his highest duty is *Atma-chintana* (continuous thought on the Self)?

M.: This desire to renounce things is the obstacle. The Self is simple renunciation. The Self has renounced all.

D.: It is true from Bhagavan's standpoint. But for us .... my work demands the best part of my time and energy; often I am too tired to devote myself to *Atma-chintana*.

M.: The feeling "I work" is the hindrance. Enquire, "Who works?" Remember, "Who am I?" The work will not bind you. It will go on automatically. Make no effort either to work or to renounce work. Your effort is the bondage. What is bound to happen will happen.

If you are destined to cease working, work cannot be had even if you hunt for it. If you are destined to work you cannot leave it; you will be forced to engage in it. So leave it to the Higher Power. You cannot renounce or hold as you choose.

Talk 269.

D.: How is all-immanent God said to reside in *daharakasa* (Ether of the Heart).

M.: Do we not reside in one place? Do you not say that you are in your body? Similarly, God is said to reside in *Hritpundarika* (the heart-lotus). The heart-lotus is not a place. Some name is mentioned as the place of God because we think we are in the body. This kind of instruction is meant for those who can appreciate only relative knowledge.

Being immanent everywhere there is no particular place for God. Because we think we are in the body we also believe that we are born. However we do not think of the body, of God, or of method of realisation in our deep slumber. Yet in our waking state we hold on to the body and think we are in it.

The Supreme Being is that from which the body is born, in which it lives and into which it resolves. We however think that we reside within the body. Hence such instruction is given. The instruction means: "Look within."

Talk 270.

Mr. G. V. Subbaramiah, a lecturer in English in Nellore, asked: *Brahman* is the one by whom all this is pervaded (*yena sarvamidam thatham*). But then how does Sri Krishna specify the *vibhutis* in Chapter X of *Bhagavad Gita*?

M.: The specifications are in reply to a definite question by Arjuna who required to know the Lord's *vibhutis* for convenience of worship (*upasana soukaryam*). The fact is that God is all. There is nothing apart from Him.

D.: The individual is said to give up decayed bodies (*jirnani sarirani*) and to take up new ones (*navani*). Would the statement apply to infant deaths also?

M.: You do not know, in the first place, what is *jirnani* and what is *navani*. Secondly, *jirna* and *nava* are relative terms. What is old to a king may be new to a beggar. The truth is that the individuality signifies the state of embodiment till the time of liberation!

Talk 271.

Dr. Syed: How is Grace to be obtained?

M.: Similar to obtaining the Self.

D.: Practically, how is it to be for us?

M.: By self-surrender.

D.: Grace was said to be the Self. Should I then surrender to my own Self?

M.: Yes. To the one from whom Grace is sought. God, Guru and Self are only different forms of the same.

D.: Please explain, so that I may understand.

M.: So long as you think you are the individual you believe in God. On worshipping God, God appears to you as Guru. On serving Guru He manifests as the Self. This is the rationale.

Talk 272.

D.: There are widespread disasters spreading havoc in the world *e.g.*, famine and pestilence. What is the cause of this state of affairs?

M.: To whom does all this appear?

D.: That won't do. I see misery around.

M.: You were not aware of the world and its sufferings in your sleep; you are conscious of them in your wakeful state. Continue in that state in which you were not afflicted by these. That is to say, when you are not aware of the world, its sufferings do not affect you. When you remain as the Self, as in sleep, the world and its sufferings will not affect you. Therefore look within. See the Self! There will be an end of the world and its miseries.

D.: But that is selfishness.

M.: The world is not external. Because you identify yourself wrongly with the body you see the world outside, and its pain becomes apparent to you. But they are not real. Seek the reality and get rid of this unreal feeling.

D.: There are great men, public workers, who cannot solve the problem of the misery of the world.

M.: They are ego-centred and therefore their inability. If they remained in the Self they would be different.

D.: Why do not Mahatmas help?

M.: How do you know that they do not help? Public speeches, physical activity and material help are all outweighed by the silence of Mahatmas. They accomplish more than others.

D.: What is to be done by us for ameliorating the condition of the world?

M.: If *you* remain free from pain, there will be no pain anywhere. The trouble now is due to your seeing the world externally and also thinking that there is pain there. But both the world and the pain are within you. If you look within there will be no pain.

D.: God is perfect. Why did He create the world imperfect? The work shares the nature of the author. But here it is not so.

M.: Who is it that raises the question?

D.: I - the individual.

M.: Are you apart from God that you ask this question?

So long as you consider yourself the body you see the world as external. The imperfections appear to you. God is perfection. His work also is perfection. But you see it as imperfection because of your wrong identification.

D.: Why did the Self manifest as this miserable world?

M.: In order that you might seek it. Your eyes cannot see themselves. Place a mirror before them and they see themselves. Similarly with the creation. "See yourself first and then see the whole world as the Self."

D.: So it amounts to this - that I should always look within.

M.: Yes.

D.: Should I not see the world at all?

M.: You are not instructed to shut your eyes from the world. You are only to "see yourself first and then see the whole world as the Self". If you consider yourself as the body the world appears to be external. If you are the Self the world appears as Brahman.

Talk 273.

Dr. Syed asked: I have been reading the *Five Hymns*. I find that the hymns are addressed to Arunachala by you. You are an Advaitin. How do you then address God as a separate Being?

M.: The devotee, God and the Hymns are all the Self.

D.: But you are addressing God. You are specifying this Arunachala Hill as God.

M.: You can identify the Self with the body. Should not the devotee identify the Self with Arunachala?

D.: If Arunachala be the Self why should it be specially picked out among so many other hills? God is everywhere. Why do you specify Him as Arunachala?

M.: What has attracted you from Allahabad to this place? What has attracted all these people around?

D.: Sri Bhagavan.

M.: How was I attracted here? By Arunachala. The Power cannot be denied. Again Arunachala is within and not without. The Self is Arunachala.

D.: Several terms are used in the holy books - *Atman, Paramatman, Para*, etc. What is the gradation in them?

M.: They mean the same to the user of the words. But they are understood differently by persons according to their development.

D.: But why do they use so many words to mean the same thing?

M.: It is according to circumstances. They all mean the Self. *Para* means 'not relative' or 'beyond the relative', that is to say, the Absolute.

D.: Should I meditate on the right chest in order to meditate on the Heart?

M.: The Heart is not physical. Meditation should not be on the right or the left. Meditation should be on the Self. Everyone knows 'I am'. Who is the 'I'? It will be neither within nor without, neither on the right nor on the left. 'I am' - that is all.

The Heart is the centre from which everything springs. Because you see the world, the body and so on, it is said that there is a centre for these, which is called the Heart. When you are in the Heart, the Heart is known to be neither the centre nor the circumference. There is nothing else. Whose centre could it be?

D.: May I take it that the Self and the non-Self are like substance and its shadow?

M.: Substance and shadow are for the one who sees only the shadow and mistakes it for the substance and sees its shadow also. But there is neither substance nor shadow for the one who is aware only of the Reality.

D.: Buddha, when asked if there is the ego, was silent; when asked if there is no ego, he was silent; asked if there is God, he was silent; asked if there is no God, he was silent. Silence was his answer for all these. *Mahayana* and *Hinayana* schools have both misinterpreted his silence because they say that he was an atheist. If he was an atheist, why should he have spoken of *nirvana*, of births and deaths, of *karma*, reincarnations and *dharma*? His interpreters are wrong. Is it not so?

M.: You are right.

27th October, 1936

Talk 274.

The Muslim Professor asked how *Vaishnavism* can be reconciled to *Advaitism*.

M.: The *Vaishnavites* call themselves *Visishtadvaitins*. This is also *Advaita*. Just as the individual body comprises the soul, the ego and the gross body, so also God comprises *Paramatma*, the world and the individuals.

D.: Does not *bhakti* imply duality?

M.: Swa swarupanusandhanam bhaktirityabhidheeyate (Reflection on one's own Self is called *bhakti*). *Bhakti* and Self-Enquiry are one and the same. The Self of the *Advaitins* is the God of the *bhaktas*.

D.: Is there a spiritual hierarchy of all the original propounders of religions watching the spiritual welfare of the humans?

M.: Let them be or let them not be. It is only a surmise at the best. Atma is *pratyaksha* (self-evident). Know it and be done with speculation. One may admit such a hierarchy; another may not. But no one can gainsay the Atma.

D.: What does Sri Bhagavan think of *Pravritti* and *nivritti margas*?

M.: Yes. Both are mentioned. What of that?

D.: Which is the better of the two?

M.: If you see the Self - pure and simple - it is *nivritti*; if you see the Self with the world, it is *pravritti*. In other words, inward-turned mind (*antarmukhi manas*) is *nivritti*; outward-going mind (*bahirmukhi manas*) is *pravritti*. Anyway, there is nothing apart from the Self. Both are the same.

Similarly also, with the spiritual hierarchy; they cannot exist apart from the Self. They are only in the Self and remain as the Self. Realisation of the Self is the one Goal of all.

5th November, 1936

Talk 275.

In the course of conversation, someone referred to the fact that when Mr. Brunton and a lady were walking home in the night, they saw a bright glow on half the hill moving slowly and gently from North to South.

Sri Bhagavan said: This hill is said to be wisdom in visible shape.

D.: How is it visible to the physical eye?

M.: Sambandar had sung "The One who fascinated my heart or the captivator of my heart, I sing of Him in my mind". The Heart is captivated: consequently the mind must have sunk into the Heart; and yet there is the remembrance which enables the saint to sing of God later.

Then the experience of a young disciple was mentioned. The young man, educated and in good circumstances, in good health and sober mind, was once facing Sri Bhagavan's picture in his home and meditating on the figure. The figure suddenly appeared animated with life, which threw the young man into a spasm of fear. He called out for his mother. His mother came and asked him what the matter was. He was surrounded by his relatives who were perplexed by his appearance. He was aware of their presence, but was still overpowered by a mysterious force which he tried to resist. He became unconscious for a short time. Fear seized him as he regained consciousness. The people became anxious and tried to bring him round with medicines.

When later he came to Tiruvannamalai he had some foreboding of similar experience. The proximity of Sri Bhagavan prevented any untoward happening. But whenever he wandered away from the hall he found the force almost irresistible and himself in the grip of fear.

Sri Bhagavan said: "Is it so? No one told me this before."

A devotee asked, if it was not *saktipata* (descent of divine power)?

M.: Yes it is. A madman clings to *samskaras*, whereas a *jnani* does not. That is the only difference between the two. *Jnana* is madness of a kind.

D.: But *saktipata* is said to occur in *karmasamya, i.e.*, when merit and demerit are equal.

M.: Yes. *Malaparipaka*, *karmasamya* and *saktipata* mean the same, A man is running the course of his *samskaras*; when taught he is the Self, the teaching affects his mind and imagination runs riot. He feels helpless before the onrushing power. His experiences are only according to his imagination of the state "I am the Self", whatever he may conceive it to be. *Saktipata* alone confers the true and right experience.

When the man is ripe for receiving the instruction and his mind is about to sink into the Heart, the instruction imparted works in a flash and he realises the Self all right. Otherwise, there is always the struggle.

Mano-nasa, jnana, and *chittaikagrata* (annihilation of the mind, knowledge and one-pointedness) means the same.

Talk *276*.

The U. P. lady arrived with her brother, a woman companion and a burly bodyguard.

When she came into the hall she saluted Maharshi with great respect and feeling, and sat down on a wool blanket in front of Sri Bhagavan. Sri Bhagavan was then reading *Trilinga* in Telugu on the reincarnation of a boy. The boy is now thirteen years old and reading in the Government High School in a village near Lucknow. When he was three years he used to dig here and there; when asked, he would say that he was trying to recover something which he had hidden in the earth. When he was four years old, a marriage function was celebrated in his home. When leaving, the guests humorously remarked that they would return for this boy's marriage. But he turned round and said: "I am already married. I have two wives." When asked to point them out, he requested to be taken to a certain village, and there he pointed to two women as his wives. It is now learnt that a period of ten months elapsed between the death of their husband and the birth of this boy.

When this was mentioned to the lady, she asked if it was possible to know the after-death state of an individual.

Sri Bhagavan said, "some are born immediately after, others after some lapse of time, a few are not reborn on this earth but eventually get salvation in some higher region, and a very few get absolved here and now."

She: I do not mean that. Is it possible to know the condition of an individual after his death?

M.: It is possible. But why try to know it? All facts are only as true as the seeker.

She: The birth of a person, his being and death are real to us.

M.: Because you have wrongly identified your own self with the body, you think of the other one in terms of the body. Neither you are nor the other is the body.

She: But from my own level of understanding I consider myself and my son to be real.

M.: The birth of the 'I-thought' is one's own birth, its death is the person's death. After the 'I-thought' has arisen the wrong identity with the

body arises. Thinking yourself the body, you give false values to others and identify them with bodies. Just as your body has been born, grows and will perish, so also you think the other was born, grew up and died. Did you think of your son before his birth? The thought came after his birth and persists even after his death. Inasmuch as you are thinking of him he is your son. Where has he gone? He has gone to the source from which he sprang. He is one with you. So long as you are, he is there too. If you cease to identify yourself with the body, but see the real Self, this confusion will vanish. You are eternal. The others also will similarly be found to be eternal. Until this truth is realised there will always be this grief due to false values arising from wrong knowledge and wrong identity.

She: Let me have true knowledge by Sri Bhagavan's Grace.

M.: Get rid of the 'I-thought'. So long as 'I' is alive, there is grief. When 'I' ceases to exist, there is no grief. Consider the state of sleep!

She: Yes. But when I take to the 'I-thought', other thoughts arise and disturb me.

M.: See whose thoughts they are. They will vanish. They have their root in the single 'I-thought'. Hold to it and they will disappear.

Again the Master pointed to the story of *Punya* and *Papa* in *Yoga Vasishta*, V. Ch. 20, where *Punya* consoles *Papa* on the death of their parents and turns him to realising the Self. Further, creation is to be considered in its two aspects, *Isvara srishti* (God's creation) and *jiva srishti* (individual's creation). Of these two, the universe is the former, and its relation to the individual is the latter. It is the latter which gives rise to pain and pleasure, irrespective of the former. A story was mentioned from *Panchadasi*. There were two young men in a village in South India. They went on a pilgrimage to North India. One of them died. The survivor, who was earning something, decided to return only after some months. In the meantime he came across a wandering pilgrim whom he asked to convey the information regarding himself and his dead companion to the village in South India. The wandering pilgrim did so, but by mistake changed the names. The result was that the dead man's parents rejoiced in his safety and the living one's parents were in grief. Thus, you see, pain or pleasure has no reference to facts but to mental conceptions.

Jiva Srishti is responsible for it. Kill the *jiva* and there is no pain or pleasure but the mental bliss persists forever. Killing the *jiva* is to abide in the Self.

She: I hear all this. It is beyond my grasp. I pray Sri Bhagavan to help me to understand it all.

"I had been to a waterfall in Mysore. The cascade was a fascinating sight. The waters streamed out in the shapes of fingers trying to grasp the rocks but were rushed on by the current to the depths below. I imagined this to be the state of the individuals clinging to their present surroundings. But I cannot help clinging.

"I cannot imagine that we are no better than seasonal flowers, fruits and leaves on trees. I love flowers but still this idea has no hold on me."

After a few minutes, she pointed out that she had intended to ask Maharshi about death and matters relating to it but did not however do it. Yet Maharshi was reading the related matter in the newspaper and the same topic came up for enlightenment. She left after seeing the cow Lakshmi.

9th November, 1936

Talk *277.*

Mr. Cohen: What is will? I mean - where does it fit in, in the five *kosas*?

M.: The 'I-thought' arises first and then all other thoughts. They comprise the mind. The mind is the object and the 'I' is the subject. Can there be will without the 'I'? It is comprised in the 'I'. The 'I-thought' is the *vijnanamaya kosa* (intellectual sheath). Will is included in it.

Sri Bhagavan said further: *Annamaya kosa* is the gross body sheath. The senses with the *prana* and the *karmendriyas* form the *pranamayakosa* (sense-sheath). The senses with the mind form the *manomaya kosa* (mind-sheath). They are the *jnanendryas*. The mind is formed of thoughts only *Idam* (this) is the object and *aham* ('I') is the subject; the two together form the *vijnanamayakosa* (intellect-sheath).

10th November, 1936

Talk 278.

Miss W. Umadevi, a Polish lady, convert to Hinduism, had travelled in Kashmir and brought views from Kashmir at which we were looking.

Sri Bhagavan humorously, remarked, "We have seen those places without the trouble of travel."

D.: I wish to go to Kailas.

M.: One can see these places only if destined. Not otherwise. After seeing all, there will still remain more - if not in this hemisphere, maybe in the other. Knowledge implies ignorance of what lies beyond what is known. Knowledge is always limited.

After some time Sri Bhagavan continued: Appar was decrepit and old and yet began to travel to Kailas.

Another old man appeared on the way and tried to dissuade him from the attempt, saying that it was so difficult to reach there. Appar was however obdurate and said that he would risk his life in the attempt. The stranger asked him to dip himself in a tank close by. Appar did so and found Kailas then and there.

Where did all this happen? In Tiruvayyar, nine miles from Tanjore. Where is Kailas then? Is it within the mind or outside it? If Tiruvayyar be truly Kailas, it must appear to others as well. But Appar alone found it so.

Similarly it is said of other places of pilgrimage in the South, that they are the abodes of Siva, and devotees found them so. This was true from their standpoint. Everything is within. There is nothing without.

Talk 279.

D.: How long does it take a man to be reborn after death? Is it immediately after death or some time after?

M.: You do not know what you were before birth, yet you want to know what you will be after death. Do you know what you are now?

Birth and rebirth pertain to the body. You are identifying the Self with the body. It is a wrong identification. You believe that the

body has been born and will die, and confound the phenomena relating to the one with the other. Know your real being and these questions will not arise.

Birth and rebirth are mentioned only to make you investigate the question and find out that there are neither births nor rebirths. They relate to the body and not to the Self. Know the Self and be not perturbed by doubts.

Talk 280.

D.: Can you help me to get rid of *Maya*?

M.: What is *Maya*?

D.: Attachment to the world.

M.: Was the world in your deep sleep? Was there attachment to it?

D.: There was not.

M.: Were you there or not?

D.: Maybe.

M.: Then do you deny having existed in sleep?

D.: I do not.

M.: You are therefore now "the same one as there was in sleep."

D.: Yes.

Sleep	*Wakefulness*
No world	World
No attachment	Attachment
The Self	The Self

M.: What is it then that raises the question of *Maya* just now?

D.: The mind was not in sleep. The world and the attachment to it are of the mind.

M.: That is it. The world and the attachment to it are of the mind, not of the Self.

D.: I was ignorant in sleep.

M.: Who says that he was ignorant? Is he not ignorant now? Is he a *jnani*?

Ignorance is now mentioned by the contaminated Self here.

D.: Was the Self pure then in sleep?

M.: It did not raise any doubts. It did not feel imperfect or impure.

D.: Such Self is common to all, even in a dead body.

M.: But the man in sleep or in dead body does not raise questions. Consider who raises questions. It is you. Were you not in sleep? Why was there no imperfection?

The pure Self is simple Being. It does not associate itself with objects and become conscious as in the wakeful state. What you now call consciousness in the present state is associated consciousness requiring brain, mind, body, etc., to depend upon. But in sleep consciousness persisted without these.

D.: But I do not know the consciousness in sleep.

M.: Who is not aware of it? You admit "I am". You admit "I was" in sleep. The state of *being* is your self.

D.: Do you mean to say that sleep is Self-Realisation?

M.: It is the Self. Why do you talk of Realisation? Is there a moment when the Self is not realised?

If there be such a moment, the other moment might be said to be one of Realisation. There is no moment when the Self is not nor when the Self is not realised. Why pick out sleep for it? Even now you are Self-realised.

D.: But I do not understand.

M.: Because you are identifying the Self with the body. Give up the wrong identity and the Self is revealed.

D.: But this does not answer my question to help me to get rid of *Maya, i.e.*, attachment.

M.: This attachment is not found in sleep. It is perceived and felt now. It is not your real nature.

On whom is this accretion?

If the Real Nature is known these exist not. If you realise the Self the possessions are not perceived. That is getting rid of *Maya*.

Maya is not objective, that it could be got rid of in any other way.

15th November, 1936

SPARKS FROM THE ANVIL — 1

Talk 281.

A certain man, who claims to have been Sri Maharshi's quondam disciple, has filed a suit in the court praying for a declaration that he is the legitimate Sarvadhikari of the Asramam.

Sri Maharshi was examined on Commission. There was a crowd but the proceedings went on smoothly in the room on the North East.

The following are a few titbits therefrom: Sri Bhagavan's answers were quite spontaneous and smooth.

Q.: To which asramam does Sri Bhagavan belong?

M.: Atiasramam (beyond the four stages).

Q.: What is it?

M.: It is beyond the four commonly known *asramas*.

Q.: Is it *sastraic*?

M.: Yes. It is mentioned in the *sastras*.

Q.: Are there others of the same type besides yourself?

M.: There may be.

Q.: Have there been any?

M.: Suka, Rishabha, Jada Bharata and others.

Q.: You left home at an early age because you had no attachment for home and property. But here, there is property in the Asramam. How is it?

M.: I do not seek it. Property is thrust on me. I neither love nor hate it.

Q.: Are they given to you?

M.: They are given to the Swami, whoever he may be. But the body is considered the Swami in the world. That body is this. It reduces itself to myself.

Q.: In that case the attachment to property is now renewed. Is it so?

M.: I do not hate it - that is all I said.

Q.: In practical life it amounts to what I say.

M.: Just as we live and move in practical matters.

Q.: Do you give *upadesh*? Have you ever done it?

M.: Visitors ask questions. I answer them as well as I know. It is for them to treat my words as they please.

Q.: Is it *upadesh*?

M.: How shall I say how others take it?

Q.: Have you disciples?

M.: I do not give *upadesh* in the ceremonial manner. For instance, keeping a *kumbha*, making *puja* to it and whispering to the person.

The person may call himself my disciple or devotee. I do not consider anyone to be my disciple. I have never sought *upadesh* from anyone nor do I give ceremonial *upadesh*. If the people call themselves my disciples I do not approve or disapprove. In my view all are alike. They consider themselves fit for being called disciples. What can I say to them? I do not call myself a disciple or a Guru.

Q.: How did you approve the building of Skandasramam on the Hill which was temple-land, without previously obtaining permission from the authorities?

M.: Guided by the same Power which made me come here and reside on the Hill.

Q.: When you threw away your cash, etc., within an hour after your arrival in this place, you did so because you did not desire possessions. You never touch money. There were no possessions for several years after your arrival here. How is it that donations are now accepted by the Asramam?

M.: This practice grew up at a later stage because a few associates began to use my name to collect funds. I did not approve of their action nor check them. So it is going on. One man leaves, another steps in, but the process goes on. I do not desire that contributions should be accepted. But people do not heed that advice. I do not desire to give ineffective advice. I do not therefore check them. Since money comes in property grows spontaneously.

Q.: Why do you not sign your name?

M.: The author of *Self-Realisation* has furnished his answer for this question. Moreover, by what name am I to be known? I myself do

not know. People have given me several names from time to time since my arrival here. If I should sign by one name, all would not understand it. So I used to say to the people seeking autographs that, even if they should show my signature, people in general would not believe it to be true.

Q.: You do not touch money nor other offerings, I trust.

M.: People sometimes place fruits in my hands. I touch them.

Q.: If you receive one kind of offering, why should you not receive money also?

M.: I cannot eat money. What shall I do with it? Why should I take that with which I do not know what to do?

Q.: Why do visitors stop at the Asramam?

M.: They must know why.

Q.: You have no objection to anyone coming and staying here, I suppose.

M.: No.

Q.: You have similarly no objection to any length of their stay.

M.: No. If I do not find it agreeable I will go away. That is all.

A lawyer devotee asked Sri Bhagavan if the previous day's examination by Commission caused much strain.

M.: I did not use my mind and so there was no strain. Let them examine me for a thousand days. I don't mind.

16th November, 1936

Talk 282.

D.: Does the *Tantrik sadhana* bring about Self-Realisation?

M.: Yes.

D.: Which worship in *Tantra* is the best?

M.: It depends on temperament.

D.: What part does *Kundalini* play in bringing about Self-Realisation?

M.: Kundalini rises from any *lakshya* that you have. *Kundalini* is *prana-sakti* (life-current).

D.: Different deities are said to reside in different *chakras.* Does one see them in course of *sadhana*?

M.: They can be seen if desired.

D.: Does the path to Self-Realisation go through *samadhi*?

M.: They are synonymous.

D.: It is said that the Guru can make his disciple realise the Self by transmitting some of his own power to him? Is it true?

M.: Yes. The Guru does not bring about Self-Realisation. He simply removes the obstacles to it. The Self is always realised.

D.: Is there absolute necessity of a Guru for Self-Realisation?

M.: So long as you seek Self-Realisation the Guru is necessary. Guru is the Self. Take Guru to be the Real Self and your self as the individual self.

The disappearance of this sense of duality is removal of ignorance. So long as duality persists in you the Guru is necessary. Because you identify yourself with the body you think the Guru, too, to be some body. You are not the body, nor is the Guru. You are the Self and so is the Guru.

This knowledge is gained by what you call Self-Realisation.

D.: How can one know whether a particular individual is competent to be a Guru?

M.: By the peace of mind found in his presence and by the sense of respect you feel for him.

D.: If the Guru happens to turn out incompetent, what will be the fate of the disciple who has implicit faith in him?

M.: Each one according to his merits.

D.: What are your opinions about social reform?

M.: Self-reform automatically brings about social reform. Confine yourself to self-reform. Social reform will take care of itself.

D.: What is your opinion about Gandhiji's Harijan movement?

M.: Ask him.

D.: Is it necessary to take bath if we touch dead bodies?

M.: The body is a corpse. So long as one is in contact with it one must bathe in the waters of the Self.

D.: If the *advaita* is final, why did Madhvacharya teach *dvaita*?

M.: Is your Self *dvaita* or *advaita*? All systems agree on Self-surrender. Attain it first, then there will be time to judge whose view is right or otherwise.

D.: Why do you not preach to the people to set them on the right path?

M.: You have already decided by yourself that I do not preach. Do you know who I am and what preaching is?

D.: Is the shaving of widows among Brahmins not cruel?

M.: This may be asked of *Dharma Sastris* or reformers. Reform yourself first and let us then see about the rest.

17th November, 1936

Talk 283.

D.: How can one become *jitasangadoshah* (free from the stain of association)?

M.: By *satsanga* (association with the wise).

"*Satsangatve nissangatvam, nissangatve nirmohatvam, nirmohatve nischalatatvam, nischalatatve jivanmuktih.*"

Satsanga means *sanga* (association) with *sat*. *Sat* is only the Self. Since the Self is not now understood to be *Sat*, the company of the sage who has thus understood it is sought. That is *Sat-sanga*. Introversion results. Then *Sat* is revealed.

For whom is association? For whom is *dosha*?

D.: To the Self.

M.: No. The Self is pure and unaffected. The impurities affect only the ego.

D.: Can the soul remain without the body?

M.: It will be so a short time hence - in deep slumber. The Self is bodiless. Even now it is so.

D.: Can a *sanyasi* remain in the midst of *samsara*?

M.: So long as one thinks that he is a *sanyasi*, he is not one, so long as one does not think of *samsara*, he is not a *samsari*; on the other hand he is a *sanyasi*.

18th November. 1936

Talk 284.

D.: It is said in Srimad Bhagavad Gita: "Realise the Self with pure intellect and also by service to Guru and by enquiry." How are they to be reconciled?

M.: Iswaro Gururatmeti - Iswara, Guru and Self are identical. So long as the sense of duality persists in you, you seek a Guru considering that he stands apart. He however teaches you the truth and you gain the insight.

D.: Kindly explain: *ahameko name kaschit nahamanyasya kasyachit naham pasyami yasyaham tam na pasyami yo mama* (I am alone; none is mine; of none else am I, I see none whose I am, none who is mine).

M.: This sloka occurs in different scriptures, holy books, *e.g.*, *Bhagavata, Maha Bharata*, etc. It also forms the motto of Chapter XI in *Self-Realisation*.

Aham - 'I', is only one. Egos are different. They are in the One Self. The Self is not affected by the egos. 'I' is one only. 'I' is the Truth. All that follows is meant to refute the sense of duality.

Talk 285.

D.: If the Self be itself aware, why am I not aware of the same, even now?

M.: There is no duality. Your present knowledge is due to the ego and only relating. Relative knowledge requires a subject and an object. Whereas the awareness of the Self is absolute and requires no object.

Remembrance also is similarly relative, requiring an object to be remembered and a subject to remember. When there is no duality, who is to remember whom?

D.: What happens to the created ego when the body dies?

M.: Ego is 'I-thought'. In its subtle form it remains a thought, whereas in its gross aspect it embraces the mind, the senses and the body. They disappear in deep slumber along with the ego. Still the Self is there; similarly it will be in death.

Ego is not an entity independent of the Self in order that it must be created or destroyed by itself. It functions as an instrument of the

Self and periodically ceases to function. That is to say, it appears and disappears; this might be considered to be birth and death.

Relative knowledge pertains to the mind and not to the Self. It is therefore illusory and not permanent. Take a scientist for instance. He formulates a theory that the Earth is round and goes on to prove it and establish it on an incontrovertible basis. When he falls asleep the whole idea vanishes; his mind is left a blank; what does it matter if the world remains round or flat when he is asleep? So you see the futility of all such relative knowledge.

One should go beyond such relative knowledge and abide in the Self. Real knowledge is such experience and not apprehension by the mind.

D.: Why does not Sri Bhagavan go about and preach the Truth to the people at large?

M.: How do you know that I am not doing it? Does preaching consist in mounting a platform and haranguing to the people around? Preaching is simple communication of knowledge. It may be done in Silence too.

What do you think of a man listening to a harangue for an hour and going away without being impressed by it so as to change his life? Compare him with another who sits in a holy presence and leaves after some time with his outlook on life totally changed. Which is better: To preach loudly without effect or to sit silently sending forth intuitive forces to play on others?

Again how does speech arise? There is abstract knowledge (unmanifest). From it there rises the ego which gives rise to thoughts and words successively. So then:

Abstract Knowledge
↓
Ego
↓
Thoughts
↓
Words

Words are therefore the great grandson of the original source. If words can produce an effect, how much more powerful should the preaching through silence be? Judge for yourself.

Talk 286.

D.: Why can we not remain in *sushupti* as long as we like and be also voluntarily in it just as we are in the waking state?

M.: Sushupti continues in this state also. We are ever in *sushupti*. That should be consciously gone into and realised in this very state. There is no real going into or coming from it. Becoming aware of that is *samadhi*. An ignorant man cannot remain long in *sushupti* because he is forced by nature to emerge from it. His ego is not dead and it will rise up again. But the wise man attempts to crush it in its source. It rises up again and again for him too impelled by nature, *i.e., prarabdha*. That is, both in *jnani* and *ajnani*, ego is sprouting forth, but with this difference, namely the *ajnani's* ego when it rises up is quite ignorant of its source, or he is not aware of his *sushupti* in the dream and *jagrat* states; whereas a *jnani* when his ego rises up enjoys his transcendental experience with this ego keeping his *lakshya* (aim) always on its source. This ego is not dangerous: it is like the skeleton of a burnt rope: in this form it is ineffective. By constantly keeping our aim on our source, our ego is dissolved in its source. like a doll of salt in the ocean.

D.: Sri Ramakrishna says that *nirvikalpa samadhi* cannot last longer than twenty-one days. If persisted in, the person dies. Is it so?

M.: When the *prarabdha* is exhausted the ego is completely dissolved without leaving any trace behind. This is final liberation. Unless *prarabdha* is completely exhausted the ego will be rising up in its *pure* form even in *jivanmuktas*. I still doubt the statement of the maximum duration of twenty-one days. It is said that people cannot live if they fast thirty or forty days. But there are those who have fasted longer, say a hundred days. It means that there is still *prarabdha* for them.

D.: How is realisation made possible?

M.: There is the absolute Self from which a spark proceeds as from fire. The spark is called the ego. In the case of an ignorant man it identifies itself with an object simultaneously with its rise. It cannot remain independent of such association with objects. This association is *ajnana* or ignorance, whose destruction is the objective of our efforts. If its objectifying tendency is killed it

remains pure, and also merges into the source. The wrong identification with the body is *dehatmabuddhi* ('I-am-the-body' idea). This must go before good results follow.

D.: How to eradicate it?

M.: We exist in *sushupti* without being associated with the body and mind. But in the other two states we are associated with them. If one with the body, how can we exist without the body in *sushupti*? We can separate ourselves from that which is external to us and not from that which is one with us. Hence the ego is not one with the body. This must be realised in the waking state. *Avasthatraya* (the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep) should be studied only for gaining this outlook.

The ego in its purity is experienced in intervals between two states or two thoughts. Ego is like that caterpillar which leaves its hold only after catching another. Its true nature can be found when it is out of contact with objects or thoughts. Realise this interval with the conviction gained by the study of *avasthatraya* (the three states of consciousness).

D.: How do we go to sleep and how do we wake up?

M.: Just at nightfall the hen clucks and the chicks go and hide themselves under her wings. The hen then goes to roost in the nest with the chicks in her protection. At dawn the chicks come out and so does the hen. The mother-hen stands for the ego which collects all the thoughts and goes to sleep. At sunrise the rays emerge forth and are collected again at sunset. Similarly, when the ego displays itself, it does so with all its paraphernalia. When it sinks, everything disappears with it.

D.: What does *sushupti* look like?

M.: In a cloudy dark night no individual identification of objects is possible and there is only dense darkness, although the seer has his eyes wide open; similarly in *sushupti* the seer is aware of simple nescience.

Sri Bhagavan is said to have remarked to an inquisitive person: "What is the meaning of this talk of truth and falsehood in the world which is itself false?"

27th November, 1936

Talk 287.

A Punjabi gentleman, a doctor by profession, came here with his wife to visit Sri Bhagavan. He was in the hall when Sri Bhagavan came in after lunch; then he asked: "How should I meditate? I do not have peace of mind."

M.: Peace is our real nature. It need not be attained. Our thoughts must be obliterated.

D.: I have been trying to obliterate them but I am not successful.

M.: The Gita method is the only one for it. Whenever mind strays away bring it back to bear on meditation.

D.: I cannot bring my mind to meditate.

Another devotee: An elephant when free puts its trunk here and there and feels restless. If a length of chain is given to it, the trunk holds it and is no longer restless. Similarly, mind without an aim is restless, with an aim it remains at peace.

D.: No, no, it is all theory. I have read many books. But no use. It is practically impossible to make the mind concentrate.

M.: Concentration is impossible so long as there are predispositions. They obstruct *bhakti* also.

The interpreter advised the questioner to study *Who am I*? The doctor was ready with his protestations: "I have read it also. I cannot still make my mind concentrate."

M.: By practice and dispassion — *abhyasa vairagyabhyam*.

D.: Vairagya is necessary ...

M.: Abhyasa and *vairagya* are necessary. *Vairagya* is the absence of diffused thoughts; *abhyasa* is concentration on one thought only. The one is the positive and the other the negative aspect of meditation.

D.: I am not able to do so by myself. I am in search of a force to help me.

M.: Yes, what is called Grace. Individually we are incapable because the mind is weak. Grace is necessary. *Sadhu seva* is meant only for it. There is however nothing new to get. Just as a weak man comes

under the control of a stronger one, the weak mind of a man comes under control easily in the presence of the strong-minded *sadhus*. That which is - is only Grace; there is nothing else.

The questioner said, "I request your blessings for the good of myself".

Bhagavan said: "Yes - yes."

He left with his wife.

29th November, 1936

Talk 288.

Explaining *Maya* of *Vedanta* and *swatantra* of *Pratyabhijna* (independence of recognition), Sri Bhagavan said:

The Vedantins say that *Maya* is the *sakti* of illusion premised in Siva. *Maya* has no independent existence. Having brought out the illusion of the world as real, she continues to play upon the ignorance of the victims. When the reality of her *not being* is found, she disappears. 'Recognition' says that *Sakti* (power) is coeval with Siva. The one does not exist without the other. Siva is unmanifest, whereas *Sakti* is manifest on account of Her independent will *swatantra*. Her manifestation is the display of the cosmos on pure consciousness, like images in a mirror. The images cannot remain in the absence of a mirror.

So also the world cannot have an independent existence. *Swatantra* becomes eventually an attribute of the Supreme. Sri Sankara says that the Absolute is without attributes and that *Maya* is *not* and has *no* real being. What is the difference between the two? Both agree that the display is not real. The images of the mirror cannot in any way be real. The world does not exist in reality (*vastutah*).

Both schools mean the same thing. Their ultimate aim is to realise the Absolute Consciousness. The unreality of the cosmos is implied in Recognition (*Pratyabhijna*), whereas it is explicit in *Vedanta*. If the world be taken as *chit* (consciousness), it is always real. *Vedanta* says that there is no *nana* (diversity), meaning that it is all the same Reality.

There is agreement on all points except in words and the method of expression.

30th November, 1936

Talk 289.

While discussing *Karma*, Sri Bhagavan said: "*Karma* has its fruit (*phala*). They are like cause and effect. The interrelation of a cause and its effect is due to a *Sakti* whom we call God. God is *phala data* (dispenser of fruit).

A visitor had been speaking of the Self having forgotten its true nature. Sri Bhagavan after some time said: "People speak of memory and oblivion of the Fullness of the Self. Oblivion and memory are only thought-forms. They will alternate so long as there are thoughts. But Reality lies beyond these. Memory or oblivion must be dependent on something. That something must be foreign too; otherwise there cannot be oblivion. It is called 'I' by everyone. When one looks for it, it is not found because it is not real. Hence 'I' is synonymous with illusion or ignorance (*maya, avidya* or *ajnana*). To know that there never was ignorance is the goal of all the spiritual teachings. Ignorance must be of one who is aware. Awareness is *jnana*. *Jnana* is eternal and natural. *Ajnana* is unnatural and unreal.

D.: Having heard this truth, why does not one remain content?

M.: Because *samskaras* have not been destroyed. Unless the *samskaras* cease to exist, there will always be doubt and confusion (*sandeha, viparita*). All efforts are directed to destroying doubt and confusion. To do so their roots must be cut. Their roots are the *samskaras*. These are rendered ineffective by practice as prescribed by the Guru. The Guru leaves it to the seeker to do this much so that he might himself find out that there is no ignorance. This truth mentioned is in the stage of the hearing of the Truth (*sravana*). That is not *drdha* (firm). For making it unshaken, one has to practise reflection (*manana*) and one-pointedness (*nididhyasana*). These two processes scorch the seeds of *vasanas* so that they are rendered ineffective.

Some extraordinary persons get *drdha jnana* (unshaken knowledge) even on hearing the Truth only once (*sakrchhravana matrena*). Because they are *krthopasakah* (advanced seekers), whereas the

akrthopasakah (raw seekers) take longer to gain *drdha jnana* (unshaken knowledge). People ask: "How did ignorance (*avidya*) arise at all?" We have to say to them: "Ignorance never arose. It has no real being. That which is, is only *vidya* (knowledge)."

D.: Why then do I not realise it?

M.: Because of the *samskaras*. However, find out who does not realise and what he does not realise. Then it will be clear that there is no *avidya* (ignorance).

Talk 290.

Mr. Sagarmull, a Marwari gentleman, a cotton merchant from Bombay, seems learned in Srimad Bhagavad Gita. He asked:

Srimad Bhagavad Gita says: *mattah parataram nanyat kinchit* and later on *sutre manigana iva* - "there is nothing different from Me" and later on "like beads strung on a thread." If there is nothing but Sri Krishna, how can the world be said to be like "beads on a string?"

M.: It means that the *sutra* (string) and the *mani* (jewel beads) are not apart from ME. There are no *maniganah* (row of beads) apart from the string (*sutra*) and no string apart from Me. The *sloka* emphasises unity and not multiplicity which is only on the surface.

D.: Unity can only be after merging into Bhagavan. True - but till then there must be diversity. That is *samsara*.

M.: Where are we now? Are we apart from Bhagavan? The *samsara* and we are all in Bhagavan.

D.: But that is the experience of the *jnanis*. Differentiation persists until *jnana* dawns. So there is *samsara* for me.

M.: Samskara (predisposition) is *samsara* (cycle of births and deaths).

D.: Right. "All this is Vasudeva" - this truth has been forgotten by us. So we cannot identify ourselves with God.

M.: Where is forgetfulness?

D.: Like *svapna*.

M.: Whose *svapna*?

D.: Jiva's.

M.: Who is *jiva*?

D.: It is *Paramatma's*.

M.: Let *Paramatma* ask then.

D.: I shall make my doubt clear by means of an illustration.

M.: Whoever wants the doubt to be illustrated and made clear? Direct experience - *pratyaksha* - does not require examples for elucidation.

D.: There is *pratyaksha* and also forgetfulness.

M.: What is forgotten and by whom?

D.: Listen. One dreams; the dream-world disappears on waking.

M.: Wake up similarly from the present dream.

D.: Prakrti (nature) is too powerful.

M.: See the *Purusha* (lord) also. What can *prakrti* do then?

D.: There is a *granthi* (knot) between them.

M.: Whose is that knot? Is it of the Lord or of Nature? or of both?

D.: Due to Brahman.

M.: Then Brahman must ask or must be asked. To whom is *svapna*? or the knot? You are always saying "I ask." Who is that 'I'?

D.: I do not perceive.

M.: 'I' is eternal. It would vanish if it were anything particular. It is Perfection. So it is not found as an object.

D.: But I am imperfect.

M.: Why bring in imperfection? Why are you not perfect? Did you feel imperfection in your sleep? Why do you not remain so even now? Bring sleep into the waking state (*jagrat sushupti*) and you will be all right. *Ya nisa sarva bhootanam ... pasyato muneh ...* (That which is night for the ignorant is day for the wise).

D.: Yes, if he is a *muni* (sage).

M.: Who is a *muni*? Is he not a man?

D.: Do you not feel a slap if given to you? Is there no differentiation? Is it *jnana*?

M.: A man under chloroform or under the influence of drink does not feel it. Is he a *jnani*? Is *jnana* inconsistent with that feeling?

D.: There is seer, seen and sight. They are not characteristic of *jnana*.

M.: In sleep, in trance, in absent-mindedness, there is no differentiation. Do you call it *jnana*? What has happened in these states? Is that which then was, absent now? That which is exists for ever. The difference is due to the mind. The mind is sometimes present at other times absent. There is no change in the Reality. Reality is always Bliss - *Ananda*.

D.: Bliss is the outcome of practice. What is that practice?

M.: Sadhana is the enquiry to find out to whom all these doubts arise.

D.: It is for the ego (*ahamkara*).

M.: Wherefrom does *ahamkara* arise?

D.: Guidance is necessary to show me the way.

M.: Go within and find the route. You cannot find it from without; nor should you seek it externally.

D.: I am unable to find the ego by search. I stop there.

M.: How can you get it? It is not apart from you. Leave alone not finding it. Where are you now? Do you mean to say "I am not"?

D.: What or how am I?

M.: Do not trouble yourself about it. Let it be as it is. Why do you care? Did you care for the whole or part (*samashti*, *vyashti*) in your sleep? The same person is present now too. You are the same in sleep and in waking.

D.: Sleep and waking are different states having different effects ....

M.: How does it matter to you? The Self is the same, all through.

D.: The mind is not steady in meditation.

M.: Whenever it wanders, turn it inward again and again.

D.: When *duhka* (misery) overpowers me, enquiry is impossible.

M.: Because the mind is too weak. Make it strong.

D.: By what means?

M.: Sat-sanga, Isvara Aradhana, Pranayama - (association with the wise, worship of God, breath control).

D.: What happens?

M.: Misery is removed; our aim is removal of misery. You do not acquire happiness. Your very nature is happiness. Bliss is not newly earned. All that is done is to remove unhappiness. These methods do it.

D.: Association with the wise may strengthen the mind. There must also be practice. What practice should be made?

M.: Yes. Practice is necessary too. Practice means removal of predispositions. Practice is not for any fresh gain; it is to kill the predispositions.

D.: Abhyasa (practice) should give me that power.

M.: Practice is power. If thoughts are reduced to a single thought the mind is said to have grown strong. When practice remains unshaken it becomes *sahaja* (natural).

D.: What is such practice?

M.: Enquiring into the Self. That is all. *Atmanyeva vasam nayet* ..... Fix the mind on the SELF.

D.: What is the aim to be kept in view? Practice requires an aim.

M.: Atman is the aim. What else can there be? All other aims are for those who are incapable of *atmalakshya* (having the Self for the aim). They lead you ultimately to *atma-vichara* (enquiry into the Self). One-pointedness is the fruit of all kinds of practice. One may get it quickly; another after a long time. Everything depends on the practice.

D.: Peace is extolled more than anything else. How shall we gain it?

M.: It is your very nature. Forgetfulness never overtakes the Self. The Self is now confounded with non-self and that makes you speak of forgetfulness of the Self, Peace, etc. Oblivion will never rear up its head if this confusion is put an end to.

D.: How is that done?

M.: Enquiry into the Self. One-pointedness means cessation of mental activities. Forgetfulness must be for the self - well, of what? Of the Self? Are there then two selves? Practice removes the *samskaras*.

D.: But *samskaras* are infinite and eternal - from beginningless time.

M.: This itself is a *samskara*. Give up that idea and all *samskaras* will disappear at once. That is *visranti* (repose), *santi* (peace). Peace is

ever present. But you hold it down and rise over it and thus disturb it. Then you say, "I want Peace".

D.: Will Peace be gradual?

M.: Yes. Make the mind gradually still (*Sanaissanaih uparamet*) says the Bhagavad Gita.

After some time, the visitor asked if one Mr. G. had been here on or about the 20th instant. He himself had heard of Maharshi from him. Mr. G. was full of joy after his visit here.

M.: How can I know the names of all the visitors? He might have been here. All are full of joy. There is no name, no form …. Name is however needed for *vyavahara* (empirical life).

5th December, 1936

SPARKS FROM THE ANVIL - II

Talk 291.

Question: You spoke of *atyasrama* (beyond the *asramas* — beyond the orders of life) the other day. Is there any authority for it? Is it mentioned anywhere?

Maharshi: Yes, in the Upanishads, the *Suta Samhita* (*Skanda Purana*), *Bhagavata, Bharata* and other works.*

Q.: Are there any restrictions or discipline for that state?

M.: There are characteristics of it mentioned.

Q.: There are Gurus for each *asrama*. Is there a Guru for *atyasrama*?

M.: Yes.

Q.: But you do not admit a Guru.

M.: There is a Guru for everyone. I admit a Guru for me also.

Q.: Who is your Guru.

M.: The Self.

Q.: For whom?

M.: For myself. The Guru may be internal or external. He may reveal Himself internally or communicate externally.

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* For *atyasrama*, refer to *Narada Parivrajaka Upanishad*, v. 1-15; *Svetasvatara Up.* VI. 21; *Tejobindu Up*. I. 47-48; *Suta Samhita-Mukti Khanda* Ch. V. v. 9, 14-43; *Sivamahatmya Khanda* Ch. V. 32, 37fi 55.

Q.: Can the *atyasramis* own property?

M.: There is no restriction for them. They may do what they please. *Suka* is said to have married and begotten children also.

Q.: The *atyasrami* is like a householder in that case.

M.: I have already said that he is above the four recognised *asramas*.

Q.: If they can marry, own property, etc., they are only *grihasthas*.

M.: That may be your view.

Q.: Can they own property and convey the same to others?

M.: They may or may not. All depends on their *prarabdha*.

Q.: Is there any *Karma* for them?

M.: Their conduct is not regulated according to any rules or codes.

Q.: When visitors want to stay here, say two or three days, do they take your permission?

M.: The permission from the management is permission from me. The visitors come here for me, the management is for me. Wherever there is mutual agreement, I do not interfere. When visitors come here and I admit them, will others dare go against my wishes? My consent is implied in the actions which take place with mutual goodwill.

Sri Bhagavan was shown a stanza in His own handwriting in praise of Himself as Subrahmanya.

Sri Bhagavan said that the handwriting was His own whereas the ideas were Perumalswami's.

Q.: But do you not agree with the statement made in it?

M.: In the same way as an idol is praised as Subrahmanya.

13th December 1936

Talk 292.

In reply to a question if *tanmatras* are the operating factors in dreams, Sri Bhagavan said: No. *Tanmatras* are *sukshma* - subtler than that. Although the dream-creations are subtle as compared with the gross world of the wakeful state, yet the dream-creations are gross compared to *tanmatras*. *Tanmatras* after *panchikarana* give rise to the form of the *antahkarnas* (inner organ, mind). There too, by the different sets of

operating causes. Influenced by *satva* the predominance of ether (*akasa*) it gives rise to *jnana* (knowledge) whose seat is the brain.

vayu (air) gives rise to *manas* (mind)
tejas (light) gives rise to *buddhi* (intellect)
jala (water) gives rise to *chitta* (memory etc.)
prthvi (earth) gives rise to *ahankara* (ego).

They are *samashti* (collective) for the reason that they can operate collectively or individually with any or all of the senses or organs. By *rajoguna* they are changed to *jnanendriyas* in the *vyashti* (individual); by *tamoguna* to *karmendriyas* in the *vyashti* (the individual). The relation between the external world and the individual now becomes easy because the *tanmatras* are common to them.

The *tanmatras* proceed from *Prakriti*. The statements on creation differ considerably. There is mentioned *yugapatsrshti* (simultaneous creation) and *kramasrshti* (gradual creation). The significance is not emphasis on creation but on the original source.

Talk 293.

Mr. K. K. V. Iyer: There is no way found to go inward by means of meditation.

M.: Where else are we now? Our very being is that.

D.: Being so, we are ignorant of it.

M.: Ignorant of what, and whose is the ignorance? If ignorant of the Self, are there two selves?

D.: There are no two selves. The feeling of limitation cannot be denied. Due to limitations....

M.: Limitation is only in the mind. Did you feel it in deep sleep? You exist in sleep. You do not deny your existence then. The same Self is now and here, in the wakeful state. You are now saying that there are limitations. What has now happened is that there are these differences between the two states. The differences are due to the mind. There was no mind in sleep. whereas it is now active. The Self exists in the absence of the mind also.

D.: Although it is understood, it is not realised.

M.: It will be by and by, with meditation.

D.: Meditation is with mind and how can it kill the mind in order to reveal the Self?

M.: Meditation is sticking to one thought. That single thought keeps away other thoughts; distraction of mind is a sign of its weakness. By constant meditation it gains strength, *i.e.*, to say, its weakness of fugitive thought gives place to the enduring background free from thoughts. This expanse devoid of thought is the Self. Mind in purity is the Self. Sri Bhagavan continued in reply to the former questioner: Everyone says "I am the body". It is the experience of the sage as also of the ignorant. The ignorant man believes that the Self is confined to the body only, whereas the wise man believes that the body cannot remain apart from the Self. The Self is infinite for him and includes the body also.

Mr. Bose said that he felt peace in His presence which lasts some time after. He added: "Why is it not enduring?"

M.: That Peace is the Real nature. Contrary ideas are only superimpositions. This is true *bhakti*, true yoga, true *jnana*. You may say that this peace is acquired by practice. The wrong notions are given up by practice. This is all. Your true nature always persists. These flashes are only signs of the ensuing revelation of the Self.

In reply to the first questioner Bhagavan said: The Heart is the Self. It is not within or without. The mind is Its *sakti*. After the emergence of the mind, the universe appears and the body is seen to be contained in it. Whereas all these are contained in the Self and they cannot exist apart from the Self.

14th December 1936

Talk 294.

Mr. Parkhi: How is meditation to be practised?

M.: Meditation is, truly speaking, *Atmanishtha* (to be fixed as the Self). But when thoughts cross the mind and an effort is made to eliminate them the effort is usually termed meditation. *Atmanishtha* is your real nature. Remain as you are. That is the aim.

D.: But thoughts come up. Is our effort meant to eliminate thoughts only?

M.: Yes. Meditation being on a single thought, the other thoughts are kept away. Meditation is only negative in effect inasmuch as thoughts are kept away.

D.: It is said *Atma samstham manah krtva* (fixing the mind in the Self). But the Self is unthinkable.

M.: Why do you wish to meditate at all? Because you wish to do so you are told *Atma samstham manah krtva* (fixing the mind in the Self); why do you not remain as you are without meditating? What is that *manah* (mind)? When all thoughts are eliminated it becomes *Atma samstha* (fixed in the Self).

D.: If a form is given I can meditate on it and other thoughts are eliminated. But the Self is formless.

M.: Meditation on forms or concrete objects is said to be *dhyana*, whereas the enquiry into the Self is *vichara* (enquiry) or *nididhyasana*.

Explaining *adhyaropapavadabhyam* (superimposition and its elimination), Sri Bhagavan pointed out that the first turns you inward to the Self; and then according to the second, you know that the world is not apart from the Self.

16th December, 1936

Talk 295.

Mr. Natverlal Parekh, a Gujerati gentleman who had attended the International Religious Conference as a delegate from Baroda, came here on a visit. He is a young man, well-groomed, alert, and quite conscious of his well-earned merit. He presented a note containing some questions to Sri Bhagavan.

D.: Pray help me realise *Atma - Paramatma - Satchidananda*.

M.: Atma - Paramatma - Satchidananda mean one and the same thing, *i.e*., the Self. The Self is eternally realised. Otherwise there will be no pleasure in it. If it is not eternal it must have a beginning; what begins will also end; so that it is only transient. There is no use seeking for a temporary state of affairs. The fact is that it is the state of effortless, ever alert Peace. Effortlessness while remaining aware is the state of Bliss, and that is Realisation.

D.: I do not want intellectual answers. I want them to be practical.

M.: Yes. Direct knowledge does not require intellectual discourses. Since necessary. Everyone says "I am". Is there anything more to realise?

D.: It is not clear to me.

M.: You exist. You say 'I am'. That means existence.

D.: But I am not sure of it, *i.e.*, my existence.

M.: Oh! Who then is speaking now?

D.: I, surely. But whether I exist or not, I am not sure. Moreover, admitting my existence leads me nowhere.

M.: There must be one even to deny the existence. If you do not exist, there is no questioner, and no question can arise.

D.: Let us take it that I exist.

M.: How do you know that you exist?

D.: Because I think, I feel, I see, etc.

M.: So you mean that your existence is inferred from these. Furthermore, there is no feeling, thinking etc., in sleep and yet there is the being.

D.: But no. I cannot say that I was in deep sleep.

M.: Do you deny your existence in sleep?

D.: I may be or may not be in sleep. God knows.

M.: When you wake up from sleep, you remember what you did before falling asleep.

D.: I can say that I was before and after sleep, but I cannot say if I was in sleep.

M.: Do you now say that you were asleep?

D.: Yes.

M.: How do you know unless you remember the state of sleep?

D.: It does not follow that I existed in sleep. Admission of such existence leads nowhere.

M.: Do you mean to say that a man dies every time that sleep overtakes him and that he resuscitates while waking?

D.: Maybe. God alone knows.

M.: Then let God come and find the solution for these riddles. If one were to die in sleep, one will be afraid of sleep, just as one fears death. On the other hand one courts sleep. Why should sleep be courted unless there is pleasure in it?

D.: There is no positive pleasure in sleep. Sleep is courted only to be rid of physical fatigue.

M.: Well, that is right. "To be free from fatigue." There is one who is free from fatigue.

D.: Yes.

M.: So you are in sleep and you are now too. You were happy in sleep without feeling, thinking etc. The same one continuing now, why are you not happy?

D.: How can it be said that there is happiness?

M.: Everyone says *Sukhamahamasvapsam* (I slept happily or was blissfully asleep).

D.: I do not think that they are right. There is no *sukha* (bliss). It is only absence of sorrow.

M.: Your very being is bliss. Therefore everyone says I was blissfully asleep. That means that one remains in the primal uncontaminated state in sleep. As for sorrow, there is no sorrow. Where is it in order that you might speak of its absence in sleep? The present wrong identification of the Self with the body has given rise to all mistakes.

D.: What I want is realisation. I do not feel my inherent happy nature.

M.: Because the Self is now identified with the non-self. The non-self too is not apart from the Self. However, there is the wrong notion that the body is apart and the Self is confounded with the body. This wrong identity must be ended for happiness to manifest.

D.: I am unable to help myself.

The Engineer suggested surrender to the Master.

D.: Agreed.

M.: Your nature is happiness. You say that is not apparent. See what obstructs you from your true being. It is pointed out to you that the obstruction is the wrong identity. Eliminate the error. The patient must himself take the medicine prescribed by the doctor in order that he may be cured of his illness.

D.: The patient is too weak to help himself and places himself unconditionally in the hands of the doctor.

M.: The doctor must be given a free hand and the patient must only remain quiet without saying anything. Similarly keep quiet. That is effortlessness.

D.: That is the most effective medicine too.

The other questions which he wrote down were:

D.: Convince me of the existence of God.

M.: Realisation of the Self amounts to such conviction.

D.: How is *prarabdha* (past karma) related to *purushakara* (one's own effort here)?

M.: Prarabdha is karma (action). There must be a *karta* (doer) for it. See who the *karta* is. *Purushakara* is effort. See who exerts. There is identity established. The one who seeks to know their relation is himself the link.

D.: What is karma and rebirth?

M.: See the *karta* (doer) and then the karma (action) becomes obvious. If you are born now, rebirth may follow. See if you are born now.

D.: Help me to have *jyotidarsana* (vision of light).

M.: Darsana (sight) implies *drashta* (seer). Find him and *darsana* (sight) is included in him.

Talk 296.

Poovan, a shepherd, says that he knows Sri Bhagavan since thirty years ago, the days of Virupakshi cave. He used at times to supply milk to the visitors in those days.

Some six years ago he had lost a sheep, for which he was searching for three days. The sheep was pregnant and he had lost all hopes of recovering her, because he thought that she had been set upon by wild animals. He was one day passing by the Asramam, when Sri Bhagavan saw him and enquired how he was. The man replied that he was looking out for a lost sheep. Sri Bhagavan kept quiet, as is usual with Him. Then He told the shepherd to help in lifting some stones, which he did with great pleasure. After the work was finished, Sri Bhagavan told him: "Go this way", pointing the footpath towards the town. "You will find the stray sheep on the way". So he did and found the lost sheep with two little lambs.

He now says, "What a Bhagavan is this! Look at the force of his words! He is great! He never forgets even a poor man like me. He remembers my son Manikkam also with kindness. Such are the great ones! I am happy when I do any little work for Him, such as looking to the cows when they are in heat".

18th December, 1936

Talk 297.

Mr. Cohen asked: Meditation is with mind in the *jagrat* (waking) state. There is mind in dream also. Why is there no meditation in dream? Nor is it possible?

M.: Ask it in the dream.

After a short silence Sri Bhagavan continued: You are told to meditate now and find who you are. Instead of doing it you ask "Why is there no meditation in dream or in sleep?" If you find out for whom there is *jagrat* (waking), it will be clear that dream and sleep are also for the same one. You are the witness of *jagrat* (waking), *svapna* (dream) and *sushupti* (sleep) - rather, they pass before you. Because you are out of meditation now, these questions arise. Stick to meditation and see if these questions arise.

23rd December, 1936

Talk 298.

A certain visitor formulated a question, saying that meditation is more direct than investigation, because the former holds on to the truth whereas the latter sifts the truth from untruth.

M.: For the beginner meditation on a form is more easy and agreeable. Practice of it leads to *Atmavichara* which consists in sifting the Reality from unreality.

What is the use of holding on to truth when you are filled with antagonistic factors?

Atmavichara directly leads to realisation by removing the obstacles which make you think that the Self is not already realised.

24th December, 1936

Talk 299.

Mr. T. K. S. Iyer asked Sri Bhagavan about the source of sound.

M.: The general opinion is that *para* (sound) comes from the *Muladhara* (the solar plexus) at the bottom of the spine. All sounds beginning from *vaikhar* (thought form) are contained in *para* which proceeds from *Kundalini*; and *Kundalini* is not different from the Heart. In fact the whole *shadadhara* (six-fold centre) is contained in the heart.

The *sushumna* with its source *Kundalini* is included in the Heart.

A visitor asked about *antarena taluke sendrayonih*.

M.: Indrayoni together with the *sushumna nadi* is contained (*leena*) in *para*.

25th December, 1936

Talk 300.

A *brahmachari* youth who has graduated in science has been waiting here for Grace for the last four or five months in order that some job might drop on him like a ripe apple from the tree. He has been making no other efforts to secure a job. His brother yesterday came here to take him away to his parents. But the youth declined to go. An appeal was made to Sri Bhagavan.

Sri Bhagavan said: "I do not tell anyone to come nor ask him to go. Everyone pleases himself here. He says he finds peace in the hall and he also wants a job. Evidently the job must be found in the hall itself so that his peace may not be disturbed. Peace is not in the hall. It is in the repose of the Self. It can be gained anywhere."

Some days later the youth threw away his sacred thread and appeared before Sri Bhagavan with his limbs shaking, which the young man later described as his Bliss (*ananda*). Sri Bhagavan told him not to make a habit of sitting in front of Him in the hall and ordered him out. Furthermore He continued: Even a fledgling is protected by the parent birds only till such time it grows its wings. It is not protected for ever. Similarly with devotees. I have shown the way. You must now be able to follow it up and find peace wherever you are.

The young man thinks that Sri Bhagavan gave him *upadesa* in the following words: "The self (*i.e*. ego) must be subdued by oneself.

The man however has refused the offer of a job to him in one of the local schools and thinks that he has been given a mighty job by the Hill or by Sri Bhagavan. "What that job is the world will know later", he says. He had further anticipated all this day's occurrences some months ago and had foretold them to his mother and to his friends. He is further happy at the happenings.

Sri Bhagavan however compared him to another man who is in no way of the right type. And yet the boy thinks that he is Bhagavan in embryo. Later he turned mad and died.

Talk 301.

A gentleman enthusiastically recounted several of his experiences on following Sri Bhagavan's instructions and incidentally mentioned that he and Sri Bhagavan were born on the same day of the week and bore the same name ....

Sri Bhagavan completed it, adding "The same Self is in both."

Talk 302.

A young man from Trichy asked Sri Bhagavan on the mention in *Upadesa Manjari* of *atyanta vairagyam* (total dispassion) as the qualification of a ripe disciple. He continued: "What is *vairagya*? Detachment from worldly pursuits and desire for salvation. Is it not so?"

M.: Who has not got it?

Each one seeks happiness but is misled into thinking pain associated pleasures as happiness. Such happiness is transient. His mistaken activity gives him short-lived pleasure. Pain and pleasure alternate with one another in the world. To discriminate between the pain-producing and pleasure-producing matters and to confine oneself to the happiness-producing pursuit only is *vairagya*. What is it that will not be followed by pain? He seeks it and engages in it. Otherwise, the man has one foot in the world and another foot in the spiritual pursuit (without progressing satisfactorily in either field).

A question was again raised regarding the function of the Guru.

M.: Because the man is not able to help himself, finding himself too weak, he seeks more strength in the shape of a Guru.

Talk 303.

Mr. K. R. V. Iyer sought more light on *nada* (sound).

M.: He who meditates on it feels it. There are ten kinds of *nadas*. After the final thundering *nada* the man gets *laya*. That is his natural and eternal state. *Nada, jyoti*, or enquiry thus take one to the same point. (The former are indirect and the last is direct).

D.: The mind becomes peaceful for a short while and again emerges forth. What is to be done?

M.: The peace often gained must be remembered at other times. That peace is your natural and permanent state. By continuous practice it will become natural. That is called the 'current.' That is your true nature.

Nada, photisms, etc., imply the existence of *triputi* (the triads of cogniser, cognition and the cognised). The current resulting from investigation for the Self is *suddha triputi* or pure *triad* - that is to say, undifferentiated triad.

26th December, 1936

Talk 304.

A Swiss lady described a photism she had to Sri Bhagavan. While she was sitting with her eyes wide open, she saw Sri Bhagavan's face becoming cherub-like and draped in glorious flowers. She was drawn in love towards that child-like face.

M.: The vision is in your mind. Your love is the cause. Paul Brunton saw me as a giant figure; you saw me like a child. Both are visions.

(The lady said: Paul Brunton asked me if I had any spiritual experience here, and I denied it. Now this happens).

M.: Do not be deceived by visions.

D.: If one is miles away in Europe and invokes your aid ....

M.: Where is Europe? It is in you.

D.: I have come here; I would like Maharshi to come there. (Saying it, she laughed gently. Silence for some minutes).

M.: You see the physical body and so you find limitations. Time and space operate on this plane. So long as you think of the gross body there will be differences found as different bodies. On the other hand, knowledge of the real Maharshi will set all doubts at rest.

Are you in India now? Or is India in you? Even now this notion that you are in India must go. India is in you. In order to verify it, look to your sleep. Did you feel that you were in Europe or in India while asleep? You were nevertheless existing then the same as now.

Space is in you. The physical body is in space, but not you.

Paul Brunton had his eyes closed when he saw the vision, whereas you had your eyes open, you say.

D.: Yes. But I have never had vision; whereas he is a psychic.

After a few minutes she asked if it is an advantage or a disadvantage to see visions like this.

M.: It is an advantage.

Sri Bhagavan continued: Probably you had been thinking of a child and that appeared in the vision .....

D.: Yes, only of Siva — of His child-like face ....

M.: That's it.

D.: But Siva is the Destroyer ... (meaning, not a child).

M.: Yes — of sorrows.

After a few minutes Bhagavan continued: You will shortly go to sleep. When you wake up in the morning you will say "I slept well and happily". What happened in sleep is your real nature. That continues now too; otherwise it will not be your real nature. Get the state of sleep even now; it is Siva.

Have we got a form? Find that out before you think of Siva's form. Did you not exist in sleep? Were you aware of any form then? Were you with form in your sleep? You existed all the same. The 'I' which was in sleep is also now present. You were not the body according to your sleep-experience. You are the same now - that is without the body. Being without the body you were happy too in sleep. You are the same now too. That which is enduring must

alone be the real nature. There was no body but only experience of happiness in sleep. That endures now too. The Self is bodiless. If you are thus without body how can Siva be with body? If you are with body Siva also is with body. If you are not, He also is not.

D.: Why is He then Siva?

M.: Siva means embodiment of happiness - of auspiciousness.

She was very pleased. After a time she left.

Talk 305.

The visitors were talking among themselves and one of them said: "We, though familiar with our traditional teachings, are unable to follow these teachings (meaning Sri Bhagavan's). How can the foreigners unfamiliar with our ways follow Sri Bhagavan's teachings so easily?"

He seemed to sympathise with their attempts to understand us in spite of their handicaps, and also to pity them for want of proper equipment.

Sri Bhagavan remarked finally: Visions are better than no visions. They get interested in that way. They do not take to foreign ideas; when once they do it, they stick on. So much for their merits.

Sri Bhagavan later referred to Sivaprakasam Pillai's vision. "Visions are not external. They appear only internally. If external they must assert themselves without there being a seer. In that case what is the warranty for their existence? The seer only."

Talk 306.

D.: There is something concrete necessary to meditate upon. How shall we meditate upon 'I'?

M.: We have become rooted in forms and so we require a concrete form for meditating upon. Only that which we contemplate will in the end remain over. When you contemplate the other thoughts disappear. So long as you need to contemplate there are other thoughts, Where are you? You contemplate because you exist. For the contemplator must contemplate. The contemplation can only be where he is. Contemplation wards off all other thoughts. You should merge yourself in the source. At times we merge in the source unconsciously, as in sleep, death, swoon, etc. What is

contemplation? It is merging into the source *consciously*. Then the fear of death, of swoon, etc. will disappear, because you are able to merge into the source *consciously.*

Why fear death? Death cannot mean non-being. Why do you love sleep, but not death? Do you not think now? Are you not existing now? Did you not exist in your sleep? Even a child says that it slept well and happily. It admits its existence in sleep, unconsciously though. So, consciousness is our true nature. We cannot remain unconscious. We however say that we were unconscious in our sleep because we refer to qualified consciousness. The world, the body, etc., are so embedded in us that this relative consciousness is taken to be the Self. Does anyone say in his sleep that he is unconscious? He says so now. This is the state of relative consciousness. Therefore he speaks of relative consciousness and not of abstract consciousness. The consciousness is beyond relative consciousness or unconsciousness.

Again reverting to *Tiruvachagam*, Sri Bhagavan said: All the four foremost saints have given out their experiences in the very first stanza. (1) Undifferentiated worship. (2) Never-failing remembrance. (3) Unrisen thought. (4) The ego is not, the Self is. All mean the same.

D.: But this truth is not realised.

M.: It will be realised in due course. Till then there is devotion (*bhakti*): "Even for a trice you do not leave my mind." Does he leave you any moment? It is you who allow your mind to wander away. He remains always steady. When your mind is fixed, you say: "He does not leave my mind even for a trice". How ridiculous!

27th December, 1936

Talk 307.

Mr. Shamanna from Mysore asked Sri Bhagavan: Kindly explain *Aham Sphurana* (the light of 'I-I').

M.: 'I' is not known in sleep. On waking 'I' is perceived associated with the body, the world and non-self in general. Such associated 'I' is *Aham vritti*. When *Aham* represents the Self only it is *Aham Sphurana*. This is natural to the *jnani* and is itself called *jnana* by *jnanis*, or *bhakti* by *bhaktas*. Though ever present, including in

sleep, it is not perceived. It cannot be known in sleep all at once. It must first be realised in the waking state, for it is our true nature underlying all the three states. Efforts must be made only in the *jagrat* state and the Self realised here and now. It will afterwards be understood and realised to be continuous Self, uninterrupted by *jagrat, svapna* and *sushupti*. Thus it is *akhandakara vritti* (unbroken experience). *Vritti* is used for lack of a better expression. It should not be understood to be literally a *vritti*. In that case, *vritti* will resemble an 'ocean-like river', which is absurd. *Vritti* is of short duration, it is qualified, directed consciousness; or absolute consciousness broken up by cognition of thoughts, senses, etc. *Vritti* is the function of the mind, whereas the continuous consciousness transcends the mind. This is the natural, primal state of the *jnani* or the liberated being. That is unbroken experience. It asserts itself when relative consciousness subsides. *Aham vritti* ('I-thought') is broken, *Aham sphurana* (the light of 'I-I') is unbroken, continuous. After the thoughts subside, the light shines forth.

31st December, 1936

Talk 308.

A question was asked regarding untouchability.

Sri Bhagavan said: The Non-self is untouchable. The social untouchability is man-made, whereas the other untouchability is natural and divine.

D.: Should the untouchables be allowed into our temples?

M.: There are others to decide it.

A question was asked regarding the *avatars* of Vishnu.

M.: Let us know our own *avatara*; the knowledge of the other *avataras* will follow.

Again there was a question on *Isvara*.

M.: Existence of *Isvara* follows from our conception of *Isvara*. Let us first know whose concept He is. The concept will be only according to the one who conceives. Find out who you are and the other problem will solve itself.

Talk 309.

D.: What is the difference between *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am Brahman) and *Brahmaivaham* (only Brahman I am).

M.: The former is *Pratyaksha vritti* (direct experience), whereas the latter is *Paroksha jnana* (indirect knowledge). The first begins with the realisation of *Aham* ('I'), whereas the later starts with the hearsay Brahman which cannot be apart from the Self, if the same has been realised.

Talk 310.

Mr. Greenlees: After leaving this Asramam in October I was aware of Bhagavan's peace enfolding me for about ten days. All the time while busy in work there was an undercurrent of that peace of unity; it was almost like the dual consciousness while half asleep in a dull lecture. Then it faded out entirely, and the old stupidities came in instead.

Work leaves no time for separate meditation. Is the constant reminder "I am", trying to feel it while actually at work, enough?

M.: It will become constant when the mind becomes strengthened. Repeated practice strengthens the mind; and such mind is capable of holding on to the current. In that case, engagement in work or no engagement, the current remains unaffected and uninterrupted.

D.: No separate meditation is necessary?

M.: Meditation is your true nature now. You call it meditation, because there are other thoughts distracting you. When these thoughts are dispelled, you remain alone, *i.e*., in the state of meditation free from thoughts; and that is your real nature which you are now attempting to gain by keeping away other thoughts. Such keeping away of other thoughts is now called meditation. When the practice becomes firm, the real nature shows itself as the true meditation.

Other thoughts arise more forcibly when you attempt meditation.

There was immediately a chorus of questions by a few others.

Sri Maharshi continued: Yes, all kinds of thoughts arise in meditation. It is but right. What lies hidden in you is brought out. Unless they rise up

how can they be destroyed? They therefore rise up spontaneously in order to be extinguished in due course, thus to strengthen the mind.

A visitor: All are said to be Brahman.

M.: Yes, they are. But so long as you think that they are apart they are to be avoided. If on the other hand they are found to be Self there is no need to say 'all'. For all that exists is only Brahman. There is nothing besides Brahman.

D.: Ribhu Gita speaks of so many objects as unreal, adding at the end that they are all Brahman and thus real.

M.: Yes. When you see them as so many they are *asat, i.e.*, unreal. Whereas when you see them as Brahman they are real, deriving their reality from their substratum, Brahman.

D.: Why then does *Upadesa Sara* speak of the body, etc., as *jada i.e.* insentient?

M.: Inasmuch as you say that they are body, etc., apart from the Self. But when the Self is found this body, etc., are also found to be in it. Afterwards no one will ask the question and no one will say that they are insentient.

D.: Viveka is said to be discrimination between the Self and the non-self. What is the non-self?

M.: There is no non-self, in fact. The non-self also exists in the Self. It is the Self which speaks of the non-self because it has forgotten itself. Having lost hold of itself, it conceives something as non-self, which is after all nothing but itself.

Then the discussion between the protagonists of various theories became warm.

2nd January, 1937

Talk 311.

The 'I' which rises will also subside. That is the individual 'I' or the 'I'-concept. That which does not rise will not subside. It *is* and will be for ever. That is the universal 'I', the perfect 'I', or realisation of the Self.

At 5-30 p.m. the Swiss lady complains to Sri Bhagavan that she gets a headache if meditation be prolonged for some time.

M.: If the meditator and meditation be understood to be the same there will be no headache or similar complaints.

D.: But they are different. How shall we consider them to be the same?

M.: That is due to your outlook. There is only one and there are no differences. On meditation the relative consciousness will vanish. That is not annihilation; for Absolute Consciousness arises. The Bible itself says, "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you" . . . If you consider yourself to be the body there is some difficulty in understanding the statement. On the other hand if you know who you really are, the Kingdom of Heaven and all are included in your true Self. They are concepts arising after the ego has arisen. *Drishtim jnanamayeem krtva pasyet Brahmamayam jagat* (Direct your look within and make it absolute). With that absolute awareness realised, look without and you will realise the universe to be not apart from the realised Absolute.

Because your outlook is externally directed you speak of a *without*. In that state you are advised to look *within*. This *within* is relative to the *without* you are seeking. In fact, the Self is neither without nor within.

Speaking of Heaven one thinks of it as above or below, within or without, since one is accustomed to relative knowledge. One seeks only objective knowledge and hence these ideas.

Really speaking there is neither up nor down, neither in nor out. If they were real they must be present in dreamless sleep also. For what is real must be continuous and permanent. Did you feel 'in' or 'out' in sleep? Of course not.

D.: I do not remember.

M.: If there was anything there that could be remembered. But you admit your existence then. The same Self is now speaking. The Self who was undifferentiated in sleep is differentiated in the present state, and sees the diversity. The Real Existence is the only One devoid of objective knowledge. That is absolute consciousness. That is the state of happiness, as admitted by all of us. That state must be brought about even in this waking state. It is called *jagrat sushupti*. That is *mukti*.

D.: The ego is the one which reincarnates.

M.: Yes. But what is reincarnation? The ego remains the same. New bodies appear and hold it. The ego does not change. It does not leave

one body, seek and find another. Just see what happens even to your gross body. Suppose you go to London. How do you do it? You take a conveyance, go to the docks, board the steamer and reach London in a few days. What has happened? The conveyances had moved, but not your body. Still you say that you travelled from one part of the globe to the other part. The movements of the conveyances have been superimposed on your body. Similarly also with your ego. The reincarnations are superimpositions. For example, what happens in a dream? Do you go to the dream world or does it occur in you? Surely the latter. Just the same with incarnations. The ego remains changeless all along.

Again, there is no time and space in your sleep. They are concepts which arise after the 'I-thought' has arisen. Before the rise of the 'I-thought' the concepts are absent. Therefore you are beyond time and space. The 'I-thought' is only limited 'I'. The real 'I' is unlimited, universal, beyond time and space. They are absent in sleep. Just on rising up from sleep, and before seeing the objective world, there is a state of awareness which is your pure Self. That must be known.

D.: But I do not realise it.

M.: It is not an object to be realised. You are that. Who is there to realise and what?

Talk 312.

Mr. V. K. Cholkar, of Poona: It is said "Know thyself" or see who the "I" in you is. What is the way to do it? Is it by simply repeating the *mantra* mechanically all along or have you to do it, remembering every moment why you are repeating the *mantra*?

M.: You are always repeating the *mantra* automatically. If you are not aware of the *ajapa* (unspoken chant) which is eternally going on, you should take to *japa*. *Japa* is made with an effort. The effort is meant to ward off other thoughts. Then the *japa* becomes mental and internal. Finally, its *ajapa* and eternal nature will be realised. For it will be found to be going on even without your effort. The effortless state is the state of realisation.

Mr. Cholkar again requested instructions from a practical point of view, *i.e.*, suitable to himself.

M.: It is not external and therefore need not be sought elsewhere. It is internal and also eternal. It is always realised. But you say you are not aware. It requires constant attention to itself. No other effort is necessary. Your effort is only meant not to allow yourself to be distracted by other thoughts.

The person was satisfied.

Talk 313.

Mr. Greenlees: Bhagavan said yesterday that, while one is engaged in search for "God within", outer work would go on automatically. In the life of Sri Chaitanya it is explained that while he sought Krishna (the Self) during his lectures to students, he forgot where his body was and went on talking of Krishna. This rouses doubt whether work can safely be left to itself. Should one keep part-attention on the physical work?

M.: The Self is all. Now I ask you: Are you apart from the Self? Can the work go on apart from the Self? Or is the body apart from the Self? None of them could be apart from the Self. The Self is universal. So all the actions will go on whether you engage in them voluntarily or not. The work will go on automatically. Attending to the Self includes attending to the work.

D.: The work may suffer if I do not attend to it.

M.: Because you identify yourself with the body, you consider that the work is done by you. But the body and its activities, including the work, are not apart from the Self.

What does it matter whether you attend to the work or not? Suppose you walk from one place to another place. You do not attend every single step that you take. After a time, however, you find yourself at your destination. You notice how the work, *i.e*., walking, goes on without your attention to it. Similarly it is with other kinds of work.

D.: Then it is like sleep-walking.

M.: Quite so. When a child is fast asleep, his mother feeds him in sleep. The child eats the food quite as well as when well awake. But the next morning he says to the mother "Mother! I did not take food last night". The mother and others know that he did. But he says that he did not. He was not aware and yet the action had gone on. Somnambulism is indeed a good analogy for this kind of work.

Take another example: A passenger in a cart has fallen asleep. The bulls move or stand still or are unyoked on the journey. He does not know these occurrences, but finds himself in a different place after he wakes up. He has been blissfully ignorant of the occurrences on the way, but his journey has been finished.

Similarly with the Self of the person. He is asleep in the body. His waking state is the movement of the bulls, his *samadhi* is their standing still (because *samadhi = jagrat sushupti*) *i.e.*, to say, he is aware of but not attached to actions. So the bulls are in harness but do not move. His sleep is the unyoking of the bulls, for there is complete suspension of activities corresponding to the release of the bulls from the yoke.

Still another example: Scenes are projected on the screen in a cinema show. But the moving pictures do not affect or alter the screen. The seer pays attention to the pictures and ignores the screen. They cannot remain apart from the screen. Still its existence is ignored. So also the Self is the screen on which the pictures, namely activities, are going on. The man is aware of the latter, ignoring the former. All the same he is not apart from the Self. Whether aware or unaware the actions will continue.

D.: There is an operator in the cinema.

M.: The cinema show is made out of insentient materials. The screen, the pictures, lamp, etc., are insentient and require an operator, a sentient agent. In the case of the Self, it is consciousness itself and therefore self-contained. There cannot be an operator apart.

D.: Protested that he did not confuse the body with the operator as the above answer would imply.

M.: The functions of the body were kept in mind involving the need for the operator. Because there is the body - a *jada* object - an operator, a sentient agent, is necessary.

Because people think that they are *jivas*, Sri Krishna has said that God resides in the Heart as the operator of the *jivas*. In fact there are no *jivas* and no operator. The self comprises all. It is the screen, the pictures, the seer, the actor, the operator, the light and all else. Your confounding it with the body and imagining yourself as the actor amounts to the seer being represented as an actor in a cinema

picture. Imagine the actor in the picture asking if he could enact a scene without the screen. Such is the case of the man who thinks of his acting apart from the Self.

D.: It is like asking the spectator to act in the cinema picture. Somnambulism seems to be desirable.

M.: There is the belief that the crow rolls only one iris into either eye to see any object. It has only one iris but two eye sockets. Its sight is manipulated according to its desire.

Or again the elephant has one trunk with which it breathes and does work such as drinking water, etc.

Again serpents are said to use the same apparatus for either seeing or hearing.

Similarly the actions and states are according to one's point of view. Sleep waking or waking sleep or dreaming sleep or dreaming wakefulness are about the same.

D.: We have to deal with a physical body in a physical waking world. If we sleep while work is done or work when sleep overtakes us, the work will go wrong.

M.: Sleep is not ignorance; it is your pure state. Wakefulness is not knowledge; it is ignorance. There is full awareness in sleep; there is total ignorance in waking. Your real nature covers both, and extends beyond. The Self is beyond knowledge and ignorance.

Sleep, dream and waking are only modes passing before the Self. They proceed whether you are aware or not. That is the state of the *jnani* in whom pass the states of waking, *samadhi*, deep sleep and dream, like the bulls moving, standing or being unyoked when the passenger is asleep as aforesaid. These questions are from the point of view of the *ajnani*; otherwise these questions do not arise.

D.: Of course they cannot arise for the Self. Who would be there to ask? But unfortunately I have not yet realised the Self.

M.: That is just the obstacle in your way. You must get rid of the idea that you are an *ajnani* yet to realise the Self. You are the Self. Was there ever a time when you were apart from the Self?

D.: So it is an experiment in somnambulism .... or in daydreaming.

Bhagavan laughed.

3rd January, 1937

DROPS OF NECTAR

Talk 314.

In yesterday's answers, Sri Bhagavan said that the Self is pure consciousness in deep slumber, and He also indicated the Self of the transition from sleep to the waking state as the ideal for realisation. He was requested to explain the same.

Sri Bhagavan graciously answered: The Self is pure consciousness in sleep; it evolves as *aham* ('I') without the *idam* ('this') in the transition stage; and manifests as *aham* ('I') and *idam* ('this') in the waking state. The individual's experience is by means of *aham* ('I') only. So he must aim at realisation in the way indicated (*i.e*., by means of the transitional 'I'). Otherwise the sleep-experience does not matter to him. If the transitional 'I' be realised the substratum is found and that leads to the goal.

Again, sleep is said to be *ajnana* (ignorance). That is only in relation to the wrong *jnana* (knowledge) prevalent in the wakeful state. The waking state is really *ajnana* (ignorance) and the sleep state is *prajnana* (full knowledge). *Prajnana* is Brahman, says the *sruti*. Brahman is eternal. The sleep-experiencer is called *prajna*. He is *prajnanam* in all the three states. Its particular significance in the sleep state is that He is full of knowledge (*prajnanaghana*). What is *ghana*? There are *jnana* and *vijnana*. Both together operate in all perceptions. *Vijnana* in the *jagrat* is *viparita jnana* (wrong knowledge) *i.e., ajnana* (ignorance). It always co-exists with the individual. When this becomes *vispashta jnana* (clear knowledge), It is Brahman. When wrong knowledge is totally absent, as in sleep, He remains pure *prajnana* only. That is *Prajnanaghana*. *Aitareya Upanishad* says *prajnana, vijnana, ajnana, samjnana* are all names of Brahman. Being made up of knowledge alone how is He to be experienced? Experience is always with *vijnana*. Therefore the pure 'I' of the transitional stage must be held for the experience of the *Prajnanaghana*. The 'I' of the waking state is impure and is not useful for such experience. Hence the use of the transitional 'I' or the pure 'I'. How is this pure 'I' to be realised? *Viveka Chudamani* says, *Vijnana kose vilasatyajasram* (He is always shining forth in the intellectual sheath, *vijnana kosa*). *Tripura Rahasya* and other works point

out that the interval between two consecutive *sankalpas* (ideas or thoughts) represent the pure *aham* ('I'). Therefore holding on to the pure 'I', one should have the *Prajnanaghana* for aim, and there is the *vritti* present in the attempt. All these have their proper and respective places and at the same time lead to realisation.

Again the pure Self has been described in *Viveka Chudamani* to be beyond *asat*, *i.e*., different from *asat*. Here *asat* is the contaminated waking 'I'. *Asadvilakshana* means *sat*, *i.e*., the Self of sleep. He is also described as different from *sat* and *asat*. Both mean the same. He is also *asesha sakshi* (all-seeing witness).

If pure, how is He to be experienced by means of the impure 'I'? A man says "I slept happily". Happiness was his experience. If not, how could he speak of what he had not experienced? How did he experience happiness in sleep, if the Self was pure? Who is it that speaks of that experience now? The speaker is the *vijnanatma* (ignorant self) and he speaks of *prajnanatma* (pure self). How can that hold? Was this *vijnanatma* present in sleep? His present statement of the experience of happiness in sleep makes one infer his existence in sleep. How then did he remain? Surely not as in the waking state. He was there very subtle. Exceedingly subtle *vijnanatma* experiences the happy *prajnanatma* by means of *maya* mode. It is like the rays of the moon seen below the branches, twigs and leaves of a tree.

The subtle *vijnanatma* seems apparently a stranger to the obvious *vijnanatma* of the present moment. Why should we infer his existence in sleep? Should we not deny the experience of happiness and be done with this inference? No. The fact of the experience of happiness cannot be denied, for everyone courts sleep and prepares a nice bed for the enjoyment of sound sleep.

This brings us to the conclusion that the cogniser, cognition and the cognised are present in all the three states, though there are differences in their subtleties. In the transitional state, the *aham* ('I') is *suddha* (pure), because *idam* ('this') is suppressed. *Aham* ('I') predominates.

'Why is not that pure 'I' realised now or even remembered by us? Because of want of acquaintance (*parichaya*) with it. It can be recognised only if it is consciously attained. Therefore make the effort and gain consciously.

Talk 315.

One of the attendants asked: Sri Bhagavan has said: 'Reality and myth are both the same'. How is it so?

M.: The *tantriks* and others of the kind condemn Sri Sankara's philosophy as *maya vada* without understanding him aright. What does he say? He says: (1) Brahman is real; (2) the universe is a myth; (3) Brahman is the universe. He does not stop at the second statement but continues to supplement it with the third. What does it signify? The Universe is conceived to be apart from Brahman and that perception is wrong. The antagonists point to his illustration of *rajju sarpa* (rope snake). This is unconditioned superimposition. After the truth of the rope is known, the illusion of snake is removed once for all.

But they should take the conditioned superimposition also into consideration, *e.g., marumarichika or mrigatrishna* (water of mirage).

The mirage does not disappear even after knowing it to be a mirage. The vision is there but the man does not run to it for water. Sri Sankara must be understood in the light of both the illustrations. The world is a myth. Even after knowing it, it continues to appear. It must be known to be Brahman and not apart.

If the world appears, yet to whom does it appear, he asks. What is your reply? You must say the Self. If not, will the world appear in the absence of the cognising Self? Therefore the Self is the reality. That is his conclusion. The phenomena are real as the Self and are myths apart from the Self.

Now, what do the *tantriks*, etc., say? They say that the phenomena are real because they are part of the Reality in which they appear.

Are not these two statements the same? That is what I meant by reality and falsehood being one and the same.

The antagonists continue: With the conditioned as well as the unconditioned illusions considered, the phenomenon of water in mirage is purely illusory because that water cannot be used for any purpose. Whereas the phenomenon of the world is different, for it is purposeful. How then does the latter stand on a par with the former?

A phenomenon cannot be a reality simply because it serves a purpose or purposes. Take a dream for example. The dream creations are

purposeful; they serve the dream-purpose. The dream water quenches dream thirst. The dream creation is however contradicted in the waking state. The waking creation is contradicted in the other two states. What is not continuous cannot be real. If real, the thing must ever be real - and not real for a short time and unreal at other times.

So it is with magical creations. They appear real and are yet illusory.

Similarly the universe cannot be real of itself - that is to say, apart from the underlying Reality.

Talk 316.

There is fire on the screen in a cinema show. Does it burn the screen? There is a cascade of water. Does it wet the screen? There are tools. Do they damage the screen?

That is why it is said *achchedyoyam, adahyoyam, akledhyoyam*, etc. Fire, water, etc. are phenomena on the screen of Brahman (*i.e.*, the Self) and they do not affect It.

6th January, 1937

Talk 317.

Mr. Parkhi: Many visitors here tell me that they get visions or thought-currents from you. I am here for the last month and a half and still I have not the slightest experience of any kind. Is it because I am unworthy of your grace? If so, I feel it disgraceful that I being *Vasishtakulotpanna* (of the lineage of Vasishta) should not have your grace, while far-off foreigners should have it. Will you kindly suggest some *prayaschitta* (method of expiation) for removing this disgrace?

M.: Visions and thought-currents are had according to the state of mind. It depends on the individuals and not upon the Universal Presence. Moreover, they are immaterial. What matters is Peace of Mind.

D.: Peace of mind is the result of trance. How is trance got?

M.: Trance is only absence of thoughts. That state prevails in sleep. Do you have enduring peace of mind on that account?

D.: It is said in the journal maintained in the Asramam that trance is necessary.

M.: Trance is not something apart to be got anew. Your natural state is that of trance.

D.: But I do not feel it.

M.: The fact of your contrary belief is the obstruction.

D.: Since I have not realised the Self I say that I do not understand my permanent state of trance.

M.: This is only a repetition. That is the obstruction. This arises because you think that the non-self is you. That is the mistake. Do not take the non-self to be the Self. Then the Self will be evident to you.

D.: I understand it theoretically but not practically.

M.: There are no two selves - for the self to speak of the non-realisation of the Self.

D.: It is still theoretical to me. How shall I get the trance?

M.: Trance is only temporary in its effects. There is happiness so long as it lasts. After rising from it the old *vasanas* return. Unless the *vasanas* are destroyed in *sahaja samadhi* (effortless *samadhi*), there is no good of trance.

D.: But trance must precede *sahaja samadhi*?

M.: Trance is the natural state. Although there are activities and phenomena, yet they do not affect the trance. If they are realised to be not apart from the Self, the Self is realised. Where is the use of trance, unless it brings about enduring peace of mind? Know that even now you are in trance whatever happens. That is all.

D.: But how shall I do it?

A scholar remarked: *Yato vacho nivartante aprapya manasa saha* (where words fail to reach, along with the mind).

The questioner retorted: It is also said *manasaiva aptavyam* (to be realised with the mind only).

M.: Yes. The Pure Mind, *i.e.*, the mind free from thoughts is the Self. The pure mind is beyond the impure mind.

D.: Seen with the subtlest of subtle intellect by subtle seers.

M.: What was said of mind applies to this also.

D.: If trance be my natural state, why is it said that trance is necessary to be got before Realisation?

M.: That means that one should be aware of his eternal state of trance. Inattentiveness to it is ignorance. *Pramado vai mrtyuh* (inattention is death itself).

D.: How can I be attentive without getting trance beforehand?

M.: Very well. If you are so anxious for trance any narcotic will bring it about. Drug-habit will be the result and not liberation. There are *vasanas* in the latent state even in trance. The *vasanas* must be destroyed.

Another devotee: Can there be Self-Realisation before the *vasanas* are entirely destroyed?

M.: There are two kinds of *vasanas*: (1) *bandha hetuh*, causing bondage for the ignorant, and (2) *bhoga hetuh*, giving enjoyment for the wise. The latter do not obstruct realisation.

D.: Are the Self-realised persons reborn? *e.g.*, Vamadeva, Jada Bharata, etc.

M.: The Realised ones cannot be reborn. Rebirth is due to *vasanas* which are binding. But they are destroyed in the state of Self-realisation.

D.: Are we to take it that they had gone to the stage of *kevala nirvikalpa* but not to *sahaja nirvikalpa*?

M.: Yes.

D.: If only *vasanas* for enjoyment do not obstruct the state of realisation and if one can look upon the events of the world without his state of bliss being disturbed, it means that attachment alone is bondage. Am I right?

M.: Yes, quite. Attachment is bondage. Attachment disappears with the elimination of the ego.

D.: Realisation is said to be helped by Guru's Grace.

M.: Guru is none other than the Self.

D.: Krishna had Sandipini for his Guru and so Rama had Vasishta.

M.: Guru is said to be external for the seeker. The in-turn of the mind is brought about by the Guru. Since the seeker is out-ward-bent he is advised to learn from a Guru whom he will in due course find to be the Self.

D.: May I have Guru's Grace?

M.: Grace is always there.

D.: But I did not feel the same.

M.: Surrender will make one understand the Grace.

D.: I have surrendered heart and soul. I am the best judge of my heart. Still I do not feel the Grace.

M.: If you had surrendered the questions would not arise.

D.: I have surrendered. Still the questions arise.

M.: Grace is constant. Your judgement is the variable. Where else should the fault lie?

D.: I must be enabled to surrender myself.

M.: Thayumanavar has said: "Glory to Thee for enabling me to discuss so much and follow Thy words so far!"

7th January, 1937

Talk 318.

A Hindi gentleman asked how the fear of death could be got over.

M.: Find out if you were born before you think of death. Only he who is born could die. You are as good as dead even in sleep. What fear is there of death?

D.: How are we in sleep?

M.: Ask the question in sleep. You recall the experience of sleep only when you are awake. You recall that state by saying "I slept happily".

D.: What is the instrument by which we experience that state?

M.: We call it *Mayakarana* as opposed to the *antahkarana* to which we are accustomed in our other states. The same instruments are called differently in the different states, even as the *anandatman* of sleep is termed the *vijnanatman* of the wakeful state.

D.: Please furnish me with an illustration for the *mayakarana* experiencing the *ananda*.

M.: How can you say "I slept happily"? The experience is there to prove your happiness. There cannot be the remembrance in the wakeful state in the absence of the experience in the sleep state.

D.: Agreed. But please give me an illustration.

M.: How can it be described? If you dive into water for recovering an article you speak of its recovery only after rising out of the water. You do not say anything while remaining sunk in water.

D.: I do not have fear in sleep whereas I have it now.

M.: Because *dwiteeyadvai bhayam bhavati* - fear is always of a second one. Of what are you afraid?

D.: By reason of the perception of the body, the senses, the world, *Isvara*, doership, enjoyment etc.

M.: Why do you see them if they cause fear?

D.: Because they are inescapable.

M.: But it is you who sees them. For whom is the fear? Is it for them?

D.: No, it is for me.

M.: Because you see them, you fear them. Do not see them and there will be no fear.

D.: What then should I do in the waking state?

M.: Be the Self; there will be no second thing to cause you fear.

D.: Yes. Now I understand. If I see my Self, then the sight is warded off the non-self and there is happiness. Yet there is the fear of death.

M.: Only the one who is born should die. See if you have been born at all in order that death should threaten you.

Talk 319.

Mr. Sridhar, a Hindu from Goa, asked: What is *kousalam* (skill) in *Yogah karmasu kousalam* (yoga is skill in action). How is that gained?

M.: Do actions without caring for the result. Do not think that you are the doer. Dedicate the work to God. That is the skill and also the way to gain it.

D.: Samatvam yoga uchyate (Equanimity is yoga). What is that equanimity?

M.: It is unity in diversity. The universe is now seen to be diverse. See the common factor (*sama*) in all the objects. When that is done equality in the pairs of opposites (*dwandwani*) naturally follows. It is the latter which is however spoken of as equanimity ordinarily.

D.: How is the common factor to be perceived in the diversity?

M.: The seer is only one. They do not appear without the seer. There is no change in the seer, however much the others may change.

Yogah karmasu kousalam = Skill in work is yoga,

Samatvam yoga uchyate = Equanimity is yoga,

Mamekam saranam vraja = Only surrender to Me,

Ekamevadwiteeyam = Only one without a second,

representing Karma, Yoga, *Bhakti* and *Jnana* convey the same meaning. They are only the single Truth presented in different aspects.

Mr. Ekanatha Rao: Is Grace necessary for it?

M.: Yes.

D.: How to gain Divine Grace?

M.: By surrender.

D.: Still I do not feel Grace.

M.: Sincerity is wanting. Surrender should not be verbal nor conditional.

Passages from St. Justinian were read out to illustrate these statements.

Prayer is not verbal. It is from the heart. To merge into the Heart is prayer. That is also Grace.

The Alwar says: "I was all along seeking Thee. But on realising the Self I find you are the Self. The Self is my all, and so you are my All."

D.: Impurities of limitation, ignorance and desire (*anava, mayika*, and *kamya*) place obstacles in the way of meditation. How to conquer them?

M.: Not to be swayed by them.

D.: Grace is necessary.

M.: Yes, Grace is both the beginning and the end. Introversion is due to Grace: Perseverance is Grace; and Realisation is Grace. That is the reason for the statement: *Mamekam saranam vraja* (only surrender to Me). If one has entirely surrendered oneself is there any part left to ask for Grace? He is swallowed up by Grace.

D.: The obstacles are powerful and obstruct meditation.

M.: If a Higher Power is recognised and surrendered to, how will they obstruct you? If you say "They are powerful," the source of their Power must be held so that they do not obstruct you.

Talk 320.

In the course of an informal conversation Sri Bhagavan pointed out that Self-Realisation is possible only for the fit. The *vasanas* must be eliminated before *jnana* dawns. One must be like Janaka for *jnana* to dawn. One must be ready to sacrifice everything for the Truth. Complete renunciation is the index of fitness.

Talk 321.

D.: Miseries appear in *jagrat*. Why should they appear.

M.: If you see your Self they will not appear.

D.: If I turn to look who I am I do not find anything.

M.: How did you remain in your sleep? There was no 'I-thought' there and you were happy. Whereas there are thoughts flowering in the wake of the root-thought 'I' in the *jagrat* and these hide the inherent happiness. Get rid of these thoughts which are the obstacles to happiness. Your natural state is one of happiness as was evident in your sleep.

D.: I do not know anything of my sleep experience.

M.: But you know that it was happiness. Otherwise you would not be saying "I slept happily". When there is no thought, no 'I', and nothing In fact except yourself, you are happy. That is the whole Truth.

This is exactly what is conveyed by the Mahavakya *Tatvamasi* (You are That). Find your Self: and then "That" is known.

D.: How is that Brahman?

M.: Why do you want to know of Brahman apart from yourself? The scripture says "You are That". The Self is intimate to you and you cannot indeed be without the Self. Realise it. That is the Realisation of Brahman also.

D.: But I am unable to do it. I am too weak to realise my Self.

M.: In that case surrender yourself unreservedly and the Higher Power will reveal Itself.

D.: What is unconditional surrender?

M.: If one surrenders oneself there will be no one to ask questions or to be thought of. Either the thoughts are eliminated by holding on to the root-thought 'I' or one surrenders oneself unconditionally to the Higher Power. These are the only two ways for Realisation.

Talk 322.

A cultured lady, daughter of a well-known solicitor of Madras asked: What should one do in order to remain free from thoughts as advised by you? Is it only the enquiry "Who am I?"

M.: Only to remain still. Do it and see.

D.: It is impossible.

M.: Exactly. For the same reason the enquiry "Who am I?" is advised.

D.: Raising the question, no response comes from within.

M.: What kind of response do you expect? Are you not there? What more?

D.: Thoughts rise up more and more.

M.: Then and there raise the same question, "Who am I?"

D.: Should I do so as each thought arises? Well. Is the world our thought only?

M.: Leave this question to the world. Let it ask, "How did I come into being?"

D.: Do you mean that it is not related to me?

M.: Nothing is perceived in deep sleep; all these are seen only after waking; only after thoughts arise the world comes into being; what can it be but thought?

Another visitor asked: What should we do to make the mind still?

M.: First let the mind be caught hold of and brought here: then we shall consider ways and means of stilling it.

D.: I meant to say that it is always changing - even when we do our *japa*.

M.: Japa is meant only for stilling the mind.

D.: What *japa* is good for it?

M.: Anything suitable, such as *Gayatri*.

D.: Will *Gayatri do*?

M.: Can anything excel it? Only those who cannot do it look for others. It contains the whole range of truth in it. Chanting (*japa*) will lead to *dhyana* (meditation) and it is the means for realising the Self.

D.: Will half an hour a day do for it?

M.: It must be done always, or as long as you can.

Talk 323.

While explaining stanza 6 in *Arunachala Ashtaka*, Sri Bhagavan observed as follows:

The final word in the previous stanza asks, "Is there one?" The initial words in the present stanza answer, "Yes, there is the One....." It proceeds, "Though it is the only One, yet by its wonderful power it gets reflected on the tiny dot 'I' (the ego) otherwise known as ignorance or the aggregate of latent tendencies; this reflected light is relative knowledge. This, according to one's *prarabdha* (past karma now fructifying), manifests the inner latent tendencies as the outer gross world and withdraws the gross external world as the subtle internal tendencies; such power is called mind in the subtle plane and brain in the physical plane. This mind or brain acts as the magnifier to that Eternal One Being and shows It forth as the expanded universe. In the waking and dream states the mind is out-ward bent and in sleep it is in-ward bent; with the mind as the medium, the one Supreme Being seems diversified in the waking and dream states and remains withdrawn in the sleep state, or swoon, etc. Therefore you are only That and cannot be otherwise. Whatever the changes, the same one Being remains as yourself; there is nothing besides yourself."

The previous stanza says: Once exposed to sunlight, a sensitive plate cannot take on images; similarly, the mind (the sensitive plate), after exposure in Your Light, cannot reflect the world anymore. Moreover, the Sun is of You only. Should his rays be so powerful as to prevent images being formed, how much more so should Your Light be? It is thus said that there is nothing apart from the One Being, Yourself.

In the present stanza the tiny dot = the ego; the tiny dot made up of darkness = the ego consisting of latent tendencies, the seer or the subject or the ego rising, it expands itself as the seen, the object or the *antahkaranas* (the inner organs). The light must be dim in order to enable the ego to rise up. In broad daylight a rope does not look like a snake. The rope itself cannot be seen in thick darkness; so there is no chance of mistaking it for a snake. Only in dim light, in the dusk, in light darkened by shadows or in darkness lighted by dim light does the mistake occur of a rope seeming a snake. Similarly it is for the Pure Radiant Being to rise up as the Ego - it is possible

only in Its Light diffused through darkness. This darkness is otherwise known as the Original Ignorance (Original Sin). The Light passing through it is called Reflected Light. The Reflected Light on its own merits is commonly known as the Pure Mind or *Isvara* or God. *Isvara* is well-known to be unified with *Maya:* in other words the Reflected Light is *Isvara*.

The other name - Pure Mind - implies impure mind also. It is the *rajasic* or active mind or the ego; this too can be projected from the former *satvic* mind through another reflection only; thus the ego is the product of the second darkness (*avidya*) Then comes the *tamasic* or the dull mind in the shape of *antahkaranas* (the inner organs); this appears as the world.

From the standpoint of the gross body it may be said to shine forth externally as the world by means of the brain.

But the gross body is of the mind only. The mind may be said to consist of four inner organs, or the principle composed of thoughts, or the sixth sense; or combining intellect with the ego, and *chitta* with the mind (*i.e*. memory-faculty with the thinking faculty), it may be taken to consist of two parts (the ego and the mind). In the latter case the *vijnanatma* (the intellectual Self) or the ego or the seer forms the subject, and the mental sheath or the seen, the object.

The waking, dream and sleep states have their origin in the Original Darkness (*mula avidya*). With the mind outgoing and deriving experiences from its modes in the waking and dream states, and indrawn in sleep, experiencing with modes of *Maya*, a unique power regulates all activities of the individuals and of the universe. All these are only phenomena passing through the Reflected Light on the substratum of the Self-radiant Being.

Just as a rope-snake cannot be seen in broad daylight, nor rope itself in thick darkness, so also the world appears neither in the *samadhi* state of Self-shining pure Being or in deep sleep, swoon, etc. Only in Reflected Light (Light mixed with Darkness or knowledge soiled by Ignorance) can the world, *not independent of its Source*, seem to rise up, flourish and be resolved. Its diversity too cannot be exclusive of the Reality, the original Source. Here a play is going on in which the One Single Being becomes manifold is objectified and then

withdrawn. There must be a *Sakti* (Power) to do it, and wonderful too! She cannot also be independent of Her origin. In the Self-shining Pure Being this *Sakti* cannot be seen. Nevertheless, Her actions are only too well-known. How sublime!

From Her sublime original activity (*i.e.*, power vibrating) *satva*-filled reflection results; from it the *rajasic* ego; then *tamasic* thought-forms which are commonly known as knowledge, or the light corresponding to the magnifying lens. Just as the artificial light is projected through a lens on to the screen, so also the Reflected Light passes through thought (the magnifier) before expanding as the world beyond it; furthermore, thought, itself the world in-seed form, seems to be the wide external world. Such is the extraordinary Power! In this way *Isvara*, individual and the world are only of the Reflected Light, having the Self-shining Single Being for the substratum.

Now, what is this 'I-thought' (the ego)? Is it the subject or the object, in the scheme of things?

Inasmuch as it witnesses all other objects in the waking and dream states, or at any rate we think that it does so, it must be considered to be the subject. On realising the Pure Self, however, it will be an object only.

Whose is this 'I-thought' (the ego)? This investigation forms the *vichara*.

'I-thought' and 'this'-thought are both emanations from the same light. They are related to *rajoguna* and *tamoguna* respectively. In order to have the Reflected Light (pure *satva*), free from *rajas* and *tamas* it must shine forth as 'I-I', unbroken by 'this'-thought. This pure state momentarily intervenes between sleep and waking. If prolonged it is cosmic consciousness, or even *Isvara*. This is the only passage to the Realisation of the Self-shining Supreme Being.

Again there are two kinds of experiences in deep sleep as recollected after waking, that is, "I slept *happily, unaware* of anything". Happiness and ignorance are the experiences. Thus we see the Power modified as (1) *avarana* (darkness) and (2) *vikshepa* (diversity). The mind is the result of *vikshepa*.

10th January, 1937

SOME REMINISCENCES

Talk 324.

(1) While in Skandasramam, Sri Bhagavan saw a white toad, small and long, at a distance of about 10 feet from Him. Sri Bhagavan stared at it and it stared at Him. Suddenly, it took a long jump and lodged itself precisely on one of the eyes of Sri Bhagavan who quickly closed it and so it was not injured.

(2) There were two peacocks which used to strut with their feathers spread out like a spangled fan. A cobra too used to take part in the pastime and raised its hood and moved about in their midst.

(3) Sri Bhagavan says that the peacock, as soon as it sights a green lizard, goes straight to it and meekly places its neck down before the lizard which bites it off and kills the peacock.

(4) Rangaswami Iyengar was once out on the hill. A leopard was nearby. He threw a stone. It turned towards him. He hurried away for his life. Sri Bhagavan met him on the way and asked what the matter was. Iyengar simply said 'leopard' as he was running. Sri Bhagavan went where the beast was and it moved away soon after. All this happened at the time of the plague. Leopards used to roam freely by the side of the temple, sometimes in twos and threes.

(5) Sri Bhagavan said, "A frog is often compared to a yogi. It remains quiet for a long time, the only sign of life being the rhythmic movement of the under-skin below the neck."

"Again frogs can remain for extraordinary long periods with their animation suspended. They are said to swallow their tongues. Swallowing the tongue is a yogic practice. The animation is suspended. The yogi does not die but the tongue must be drawn out by someone else before life-activity is resumed. It is a wonder how the frog brings out the already swallowed tongue and resumes activity."

11th January, 1937

(6) While reading "Raghuveeran" - *Ramayana* written in easy Malayalam prose - there was a passage relating how Hanuman reached Lanka mentally before he crossed over physically to that island. Sri

Bhagavan emphasised the point that the mental approach accomplishes the purpose earlier than physical action.

(7) Sri Bhagavan related the following funny anecdote; Ezhuthachan, a great Malayali saint and author, had a few fish concealed in him when he entered the temple. Some enemy reported it to the worshippers in the temple. The man was searched and taken to the king. The king asked him "Why did you take the fish into the temple"? He replied: "It is not my fault. I had it concealed in my clothes. The others exposed the fish in the temple. The fault lies in exposure. Excreta within the body are not considered filthy; but when excreted, they are considered filthy. So also with this."

12th January, 1937

Talk 325.

Mr. Rama Sastri from Guntur District composed eight slokas on Sri Bhagavan and read them out with feeling.

The Sastri then prayed for guidance. "I am a *samsari* unfit for *jnana marga*. The affairs of the world are distracting me. Please instruct me what I should do."

M.: Think of Bhagavan. How will the affairs of the world distract Him? You and they are in Him.

D.: May I do *nama smarana*? What *nama* shall I take?

M.: You are Rama Sastri. Make that name significant. Be one with Rama.

13th January, 1937

Talk 326.

In answer to a question by a long resident attendant Sri Bhagavan said: "Everybody complains of the restlessness of the mind. Let the mind be found and then they will know. True, when a man sits down to meditate thoughts rush up by dozens. The mind is only a bundle of thoughts. The attempt to push through the barrage of thoughts is unsuccessful. If one can by any means abide in the Self it is good. For those who are unable to do so, chanting or meditation (*Japa* or *dhyana*) is prescribed. It is like giving a piece of chain to an elephant to hold

in its trunk. The trunk of the elephant is usually restless. It puts it out in all directions when taken out in the streets of the town. If given a chain to carry the restlessness is checked. Similarly with the restless mind. If made to engage in *japa* or *dhyana*, other thoughts are warded off: and the mind concentrates on a single thought. It thus becomes peaceful. It does not mean that peace is gained without a prolonged struggle. The other thoughts must be fought out.

Here is another illustration. Suppose a cow plays rogue and strays into neighbours' fields to graze. She is not easily weaned from her stealthy habit. Think how she can be kept in the stall. If forcibly tethered in the stall she simply bides her time to play the rogue. If she is tempted with fine grass in the stall she takes one mouthful on the first day and again waits for the opportunity to run away. The next day she takes two mouthfuls; so she takes more and more on each succeeding day, until finally she is weaned from her wicked tendencies. When entirely free from bad habits she might be safely left free and she would not stray into neighbours' pasture land. Even when beaten in the stall, she does not afterwards leave the place. Similarly with the mind. It is accustomed to stray outward by the force of the latent *vasanas* manifesting as thoughts. So long as there are *vasanas* contained within they must come out and exhaust themselves. The thoughts comprise the mind. Searching what the mind is, the thoughts will recoil and the seeker will know that they arise from the Self. It is the aggregate of these thoughts that we call 'mind'. If one realises that the thoughts arise from the Self and abide in their source, the mind will disappear. After the mind ceases to exist and bliss of peace has been realised, one will find it then as difficult to bring out a thought, as he now finds it difficult to keep out all thoughts. Here the mind is the cow playing the rogue; the thoughts are the neighbours' pasture; one's own primal being free from thoughts is the stall.

The bliss of peace is too good to be disturbed. A man fast asleep hates to be awakened and ordered to mind his business. The bliss of sleep is too enthralling to be sacrificed to the work born of thoughts. The thought-free state is one's primal state and full of bliss. Is it not miserable to leave such a state for the thought-ridden and unhappy one?

If one wants to abide in the thought-free state, a struggle is inevitable. One must fight one's way through before regaining one's original primal state. If one succeeds in the fight and reaches the goal, the enemy, namely the thoughts, will all subside in the Self and disappear entirely. The thoughts are the enemy. They amount to the creation of the Universe. In their absence there is neither the world nor God the Creator. The Bliss of the Self is the single Being only.

When Prahlada was in *samadhi*, Vishnu thought within Himself:

"This *asura* being in *samadhi*, all the *asuras* are in peace. There is no fight, no trial of strength, no search for power, nor the means for gaining power. In the absence of such means for power - *yaga*, *yajna*, etc., *i.e.*, the gods are not thriving; there is no new creation; nor even is any existence justified. So I will wake him up; then the *asuras* will rise up; their original nature will manifest itself; the gods will challenge them: the *asuras* and others will then seek strength and adopt the means for its acquisition. *Yajnas*, etc., will flourish; the gods will thrive; there will be more and more of creation, more of fight and I shall have enough to do".

So Vishnu awakened Prahlada, blessing him with eternal life and *jivanmukti*. *Deva-asura* fight was resumed and the old order of things was restored so that the universe continues in its eternal nature.

D.: How could God Himself wake up the *asura* element and bring about constant warfare? Is not Pure Goodness the nature of God?

M.: Goodness is only relative. Good always implies bad also; they always co-exist. The one is the obverse of the other.

Talk 327.

The audience in the hall were very attentively listening. One of them, a sincere devotee of Sri Bhagavan, was so impressed by it that he soon lost himself. He later described his experience as follows:

"I was long wondering where the 'current' starts, within the body or elsewhere. Suddenly, my body grew tenuous until it disappeared. The enquiry 'Who am I?' went on very clearly and forcibly. The sound of 'I-I-I' alone persisted. There was one vast expanse and nothing more. There was a hazy perception of the occurrences in the hall. I knew that people stood up to salute at the end of the Vedic chant. I wanted

to stand: the thought soon deserted me. I was again lost in the one expanse. The experience continued until I heard the voice of Sri Bhagavan. That made me collect myself. Then I stood up and saluted. A strange feeling continued for more than half an hour. I cannot forget it. It is still haunting me."

Sri Bhagavan listened to his words and was silent for some minutes. A few observations fell from his lips:

One may seem to go out of the body. But the body itself is not more than our thought. There can be no body in the absence of thought; no outgoing or incoming in absence of body. However, owing to habit, the feeling of going out arises.

A particle of hail falling on the surface of the sea melts away and becomes water, wave, froth, etc., in the sea. Similarly, the subtle intellect, rising up as the tiny dot (ego) from the heart and bulging out, finally enters into and becomes one with the Heart.

Though milk remains as wide as the sea, can you drink it with a mouth as wide as the sea? You can suck it only through the tiny capillaries of the paps.

Nammalvar, the Vaishnavite saint, has said: "Only my Self is you". What does it mean? "Before I realised my Self I was wandering looking out for You; having now realised my Self I see that you are my Self". How will this fit in with qualified monism? It must be explained thus: "Pervading my Self you remain as the *antaryamin* (Immanent Being). Thus I am a part of your body and you are the owner of the body (*sariri*)"

Having given up one's own body as not being oneself why should one become another's (God's) body? If one's body is not the Self other bodies also are non-self.

The protagonists of qualified monism think that individuality is necessary to experience the Bliss. Individuality, *i.e.*, 'I-ness' should not be lost. Aha! The Self is not the body but your Self becomes the body of God! Is it not absurd?

Or if you make *prapatti* (surrender yourself) to God, you have made yourself over to Him and you are His and no longer yours. If He is in need of a body let Him look out for Himself. You need not say He is the owner of a body.

17th January, 1937

Talk 328.

A European gentleman began in measured tones and spoke clearly and slowly: "Why should individuals remain caught up in the affairs of this world and reap troubles as a result? Should they not be free? If they are in the spiritual world they will have greater freedom."

M.: The world is only spiritual. Since you are identifying yourself with the physical body you speak of this world as being physical and the other world as spiritual. Whereas, that which is, is only spiritual.

D.: Do the disembodied souls, *i.e.*, the spirits, have a deeper insight and enjoy greater freedom?

M.: Because you identify yourself with this body, you speak of the disembodied souls as being spirits. From these limitations you talk of their limitations and seek to know their capacities. Even the disembodied souls have subtle bodies, otherwise, you would not say "disembodied souls". Disembodiment means "divested of this gross body". Inasmuch as you endow them with individuality they are centred in their subtle bodies. Their limitations will be according to their own state. Just as you feel the burden of your limitations they also feel the burden of their limitations. What I meant by spirit and spiritual world is the absolute spirit and not relative. If you realise yourself as the spirit you will see that this world is only spiritual and not physical.

D.: Are their bodies temporary as our bodies are? Do they reincarnate?

M.: These questions arise because you think yourself the body. This body has birth and death and when this body falls another body arises which is called reincarnation. But are you the body? If you find that you are not this body but the spirit, you will be free from gross or subtle bodies, and then there will be no limitations. Where is the world, physical or spiritual, in the absence of any limitations? How will the question of reincarnation arise?

Again, consider it from another point of view: You create a dream-body for yourself in the dream and act with that dream-body. The same is falsified in the waking state. At present you think that you are this body and not the dream-body. In your dream this body is

falsified by the dream-body. So that, you see, neither of these bodies is real. Because each of them is true for a time and false at other times. That which is real must be real for ever. But you say 'I'. This 'I'-consciousness is present all through the three states. There is no change in it. That is alone real. The three states are false. They are only for the mind. It is the mind which obstructs your vision of your true nature. Your true nature is that of infinite spirit. That was the case in your sleep. You note the limitations in the other two states. What is the difference due to? There was no mind in sleep, but it exists in the dream and the waking states. The feeling of limitation is the work of the mind. What is mind? Find it. If you search for it, it will vanish by itself. For it has no real existence. It is comprised of thoughts. It disappears with the cessation of thoughts.

D.: Do I remain then?

M.: What is your experience in sleep? There were no thoughts, no mind, and yet you remained then.

D.: When I try to meditate, I am unable to do so because my mind wanders. What should I do?

M.: Your question furnishes the answer. First, with regard to the first part of the question, you say you concentrate, but do not succeed. 'You' means 'the Self'. On what do you concentrate? Where do you fail? Are there two selves, for the one self to concentrate on the other? Which is the self now complaining of failure? There cannot be two selves. There is only one Self. That need not concentrate.

You ask, "But then, why is there no happiness?" What is it that prevents you from remaining as the spirit which you are in sleep? You yourself admit that it is the wandering mind. Find out the mind. If its 'wandering' stops, it will be found to be the Self - your 'I'-consciousness which is spirit eternal. It is beyond knowledge and ignorance.

D.: I am hard-worked and find little time to practise concentration. Are there any aids for it? Is control of breath a good aid?

M.: Prana and mind arise from the same source. The source can be reached by holding the breath or tracing the mind. If you cannot do the latter the former will no doubt be helpful. Regulation of breath is gained by watching its movements.

If the mind is watched thoughts cease. Peace results and it is your true nature. King Janaka said: "I have now found the robber (namely the mind) who has been robbing me of my 'I'-ness. I will instantly kill this thief." The perturbation owing to thoughts appears to rob the Self of its peace. The perturbation is the mind. When that ceases the mind is said to take flight. The Self remains as the undisturbed substratum.

Another person interposed: The mind must kill the mind.

M.: Yes, if there be the mind. A search for it discloses its non-existence. How can anything that does not exist be killed?

D.: Is not mental *japa* better than oral *japa*?

M.: Oral *japa* consists of sounds. The sounds arise from thoughts. For one must think before one expresses the thoughts in words. The thoughts form the mind. Therefore mental *japa* is better than oral *japa.*

D.: Should we not contemplate the *japa* and repeat it orally also?

M.: When the *japa* becomes mental where is the need for the sounds thereof?

Japa, becoming mental, becomes contemplation. *Dhyana*, contemplation and mental *japa* are the same. When thoughts cease to be promiscuous and one thought persists to the exclusion of all others it is said to be contemplation. The object of *japa* or *dhyana* is the exclusion of several thoughts and confining oneself to one single thought. Then that thought too vanishes into its source - absolute consciousness, *i.e.*, the Self. The mind engages in *japa* and then sinks into its own source.

D.: The mind is said to be from the brain.

M.: Where is the brain? It is in the body. I say that the body itself is a projection of the mind. You speak of the brain when you think of the body. It is the mind which creates the body, the brain in it and also ascertains that the brain is its seat.

D.: Sri Bhagavan has said in one of the works that the *japa* must be traced to its source. Is it not the mind that is meant?

M.: All these are only the workings of the mind. *Japa* helps to fix the mind to a single thought. All other thoughts are first subordinated until they disappear. When it becomes mental it is called *dhyana. Dhyana* is your true nature. It is however called *dhyana* because it

is made with effort. Effort is necessary so long as thoughts are promiscuous. Because you are with other thoughts, you call the continuity of a single thought, meditation or *dhyana*. If that *dhyana* becomes effortless it will be found to be your real nature.

Talk 329.

In the morning Sri Bhagavan read out a short passage from St. Estella in the Tamil *Ramakrishna Vijayam.* Its purport is: "Your enemies are lust, passion, etc. If you feel injured turn within and find out the cause of the injury. It is not external to you. The external causes are mere superimpositions. If you cannot injure yourself, will the all-merciful God injure you in any manner?"

Sri Bhagavan further said that St. Estella was a good saint, whose teachings were quite sound.

Talk 330.

Sri Bhagavan, being asthmatic, is hoarse in throat. Oranges were brought as offerings. Pieces were distributed as usual. Sri Bhagavan was clearing His throat and was obliged to spit out the orange in His mouth. He said that He had to spit it out. A gentleman said: "Probably, it does not suit Sri Bhagavan's health."

M.: Would you say so if you had brought the fruits, instead of the other person?

18th January, 1937

Talk 331.

Mrs. Roorna Jennings, an American lady of the International Peace League, asked Sri Bhagavan about the spread of Peace in the world.

Sri Bhagavan replied that if one gains the Peace of the Self it will spread itself without any effort on the part of the individual. When one is not oneself peaceful, how can that one spread peace in the world?

The lady asked if it was not true that the East has a scientific approach to the Realisation of the Self.

M.: You are already the Self. No elaborate science is necessary to establish it.

D.: I understand the general truth of it. But there must be a practical method for it which I call 'science'.

M.: The cessation of such thoughts is the realisation of the Self. Illustration: the necklace supposed lost. One does not see the world or one's own body, being away from the Self. Always being the Self, one sees everything else. God and the world are all in the Heart. See the Seer and everything will be found to be the Self. Change your outlook. Look within. Find the Self. Who is the substratum of the subject and the object? Find it and all problems are solved.

The lady was then told of the pamphlet, *Who am I*? She agreed to read it before asking further questions of Sri Bhagavan.

Talk 332.

D.: What are the three voids (*Muppazh*) (மும்பாழ்) in Tamil?

M.: (1) *Tat = Isvara turiya.*

(2) *tvam = jiva turiya.*

(3) *asi = asi turiya.*

Turiya is the substratum of the waking, dream and sleep states.

D.: The first two are all right; what is the third?

M.: All-pervasiveness is said to be the waking;

all-shining is said to be the dream;

perfection (*ananta*) is said to be the sleep;

that which underlies these is *asi-turiya.*

D.: It is so strange!

M.: Is that all? There is no limit to polemics. Listen, They say the mahavakya *Tattvamasi* is common; another containing five words *Tat tvam asi ati nijam* is the most secret one taught by Dakshinamurti in Silence; corresponding to the five words they formulate five states.

Again look at *Vichara Sagara*; the author distinguishes *adhara* from *adhishthana.* According to him the rope is always *adhara* both when it looks like a snake and otherwise. The rope is *adhishthana* because it looks different from what it really is: that is common (*samanya adhishthana*). Again its appearance as the snake itself is *visesha*

adhishthana. Then the question is raised: the *adhishthana of Jiva* is one; that of *Isvara* is another; how can these two *adhishthanas* become one? He replies, there are the same *adhara* for both the *adhishthanas.*

Furthermore he mentions several *khyatis*;

(1) *asat-khyati:* rope being present, there appears the snake which is *not present* there.

(2) *sat-khyati:* rope itself looking like snake.

(3) *atma-khyati:* rope remaining unidentified, the remembrance of snake, formerly seen elsewhere, creates the illusion.

(4) *akhyati:* totally unreal.

(5) *anayatha-khyati:* mental image of snake projected and seen as if it were in front of oneself.

(6) *anirvachaniya-khyati:* inexplicable.

Here he raises the question: Should the world be any one of these, whether illusory or unreal; it must be the result of previous experience. It must have been real at that time: real once, must be real always.

He answers it: the experience need not necessarily be real; not having seen a real snake, but only seeing a picture of it and gaining an impression, one can mistake a rope to be a snake. Thus the world need not be real.

Why waste time in such polemics? Only turn your mind inward and spend the time usefully.

In the union of the individual with the Supreme, the Supreme is hearsay and the individual directly experienced. You can make use only of direct experience; therefore look who you are.

Why is *Isvara* mentioned then?

Because you see the world and want to know how it came into being. They say that it was created by God. If you know that He created you and all else, your mind is a little satisfied and becomes less restless than otherwise. But it is not realisation. It can be only if you realise yourself; this is Perfection or Realisation, etc.

To resume polemics - the author of *Vritti Prabhakara* claims to have studied 350,000 books before writing this book. What is the use? Can they bring in Realisation of the Self? *Vichara Sagara* is full of logic and technical terms. Can these ponderous volumes serve any

real purpose? However, some people read them and then seek sages only to see if they can meet their questions. To read them, to discover new doubts and to solve them, is a source of pleasure to them. Knowing it to be sheer waste, the sages do not encourage such people. Encourage them once and there will be no end.

Only the enquiry into the Self can be of use.

Those familiar with logic, *Vritti Prabhakara, Vichara Sagara* or *Sutra Bhashya*, or similar large works, cannot relish small works like *Truth Revealed* dealing only with the Self and that pointedly too, because they have accumulated *vasanas*. Only those whose minds are less muddy, or are pure, can relish small and purposeful works.

Talk 333.

Pratyabhijna = Prati + abhijna.

abhijna is direct perception; *prati* is to be reminded of what was already known.

"*This is an elephant*" direct perception

"*This is that elephant*" is *pratyabhijna*

In technical works, *pratyabhijna* is used for realising the ever-present Reality and recognising it.

Sunya (void or blank), *ati sunya* (beyond *sunya*) and *maha sunya* (immense void), all mean the same, *i.e.*, the Real Being only.

20th January, 1937

Talk 334.

Sri Bhagavan said that he felt no sensation in His legs though they were massaged. "If they serve the purpose of walking what does it matter if sensation is lost?" he asked. Then in the course of conversation he related that a ray of light has been found which, when projected, does not reveal the operator but enables him to witness the scene. So it is with *siddhas*. They are only pure light and can see others, whereas, they cannot be seen by others. For example Prabhulinga, while touring in the North, came across Goraknath. The latter displayed his yogic

powers *e.g.*, when his arm was cut by a sword, the sword was blunted without inflicting injury on him. This is making the body proof against injury (*kayasiddhi*). Prabhulinga offered himself to be cut. When the sword was thrust, it passed through and through his body as if it was air and there was no injury on the body. Gorak was astonished and offered himself as the disciple of Prabhulinga.

Again, there was a dialogue between Siva and Parvati in Kailas. Siva said that Allama was one who would not be affected by Her blandishments. Parvati wanted to try it and so sent Her *tamasic* quality to incarnate as a king's daughter on the Earth in order that she might entice Allama. She grew up as a highly accomplished girl. She used to sing in the temple. Allama used to go there and play on the drum. She lost herself in the play of the drum. She fell in love with him. They met in her bedroom. When she embraced him he became intangible. She grew lovesick. But a celestial damsel was sent to remind her of her purpose on the Earth. She resolved to overthrow Allama but did not succeed. Finally she went up to Kailas. Then Parvati sent Her *satvic* quality who was born as a Brahman *sanyasini*. When she surrendered to Allama she realised his true greatness.

Sri Bhagavan spoke very appreciatively of Nayana, *i.e.*, Kavyakantha Ganapathi Muni, for about an hour, how he wrote *Uma Sahasram* and *Hara Sahasram*, how he taught his students, how he engaged in dispute with Bhattasri Narayana Sastri, how meek and humble he was though so learned and capable, etc.

Sri Bhagavan related how Nakkirar, a Sanga Pulavar (Poet), faced the wrath of Siva on questioning some composition of Siva in Tamil, how he was taken captive by a spirit and afterwards released.

Nakkirar was doing *tapas* on the bank of a *tirtha*. A leaf fell down from a tree; half the leaf touched the water and the other half was on the ground. Suddenly the water-half became a fish and the land-half became a bird. Each of them was united to the other by the leaf and struggled to go into its own element. Nakkirar was watching it in wonder and suddenly a spirit came down from above and carried him away to a cave where were already 999 captives all of whom were *tapo bhrashta* (those who had fallen away from their austerities).

D.: Was Nakkirar a *tapo bhrashta*?

M.: Yes. While engaged in contemplation why did he fall away from contemplation and take to watching the mysterious happening in front of him?

He continued to say how Nakkirar composed *Tirumuruhatruppadai*, and obtained the release of all the thousand prisoners.

21st January, 1937

Talk 335.

D.: How will the sexual impulse cease to be?

M.: When differentiation ceases.

D.: How can it be effected?

M.: The other sex and its relation are only mental concepts. The Upanishad says that all are dear because the Self is beloved of all. One's happiness is within; the love is of the Self only. It is only within; do not think it to be without: then differentiation ceases to operate.

22nd January, 1937

Talk 336.

A certain Vaisya who seems to have studied the Upanishads and Srimad Bhagavad Gita asked some questions:

D.: How to realise the Self?

M.: The Self is always directly perceived. There is no moment when it is not so. How then is it to be ascertained? Find out the Self. You are that.

D.: But it is said the heart-knots are cut away and all doubts end when the Supreme is found. The word *drishti* is used.

M.: To be the Self is the same as seeing the Self. There are no two selves for the one to see the other.

Later, he continued the same question of investigation of the Self.

D.: How to realise the Self?

M.: It is already realised. One should know this simple fact. That is all.

D.: But I do not know it. How shall I know it?

M.: Do you deny your existence?

D.: No: how can that be done?

M.: Then the truth is admitted.

D.: Yet, I do not see. How shall I realise the Self?

M.: Find out who says 'I'.

D.: Yes. I say 'I'.

M.: Who is this 'I'? Is it the body or some one besides the body?

D.: It is not the body. It is someone besides it

M.: Find it out.

D.: I am unable to do it. How shall I find it?

M.: You are now aware of the body. You were not aware of the body in deep sleep. Still you remained in sleep. After waking up you hold the body and say "I cannot realise the Self". Did you say so in your sleep? Because you were undivided (*akhanda*) then, you did not say so. Now that you are contracted within the limits of the body you say "I have not realised". Why do you limit your Self and then feel miserable? Be of your true nature and happy. You did not say 'I' in sleep. You say so now. Why? Because you hold to the body. Find out wherefrom this 'I' comes. Then the Self is realised.

The body being insentient cannot say 'I'. The Self being infinite cannot say 'I' either. Who then says 'I'?

D.: I do not yet understand. How to find the 'I'?

M.: Find out where from this 'I' arises. Then this 'I' will disappear and the infinite Self will remain. This 'I' is only the knot between the sentient and the insentient. The body is not 'I', the Self is not 'I'. Who, then, is the 'I'? Wherefrom does it arise?

D.: Where from *does* it arise?

M.: Find out.

D.: I do not know. Please enlighten me.

M.: It is not from without. It is from within. Where does it come from? If elsewhere you can be led there. Being within, you must find it out yourself.

D.: From the head?

M.: Does the concept of 'head' arise after the 'I' or does 'I' arise from the head? If 'I' be in the head why do you bend it when sleep

overpowers you? 'I' is ever constant. So also must its seat be. If the head bends at one time and is erect at another time how can it be the seat of 'I'? Your head is laid flat in sleep. When awake it is raised up. Can it be the 'I'?

D.: Which is it then?

M.: 'I' comes from within. When asleep there is no 'I'. Just before waking there is 'I-thought'.

D.: The heart-knot is said to be between the eyebrows.

M.: Some say "between the eyebrows"; others "at the coccyx", and so on. All these are from the standpoint of the body.

The body comes after the 'I-thought'.

D.: But I cannot divest myself of the body.

M.: So you admit that you are not the body.

D.: If there is pain in this body, I feel it; but not if another body is injured. I cannot get over this body.

M.: This identity is the cause of such feeling. That is the *hrdaya granthi* (heart-knot).

D.: How is this knot to go?

M.: For whom is the knot? Why do you want it to go? Does it ask or do you ask?

D.: It cannot ask; I am asking.

M.: Who is that 'I'? If that is found the knot will not remain.

D.: The knot is concomitant with the body. The body is due to birth. How is rebirth to cease?

M.: Who is born? Is the Self born? Or is it the body?

D.: It is the body.

M.: Then let the body ask how its rebirth may cease.

D.: It will not ask. So I am asking.

M.: Whose is the body? You were without it in your deep sleep. After the 'I-thought' arose the body arose. The first birth is that of 'I-thought'. The body has its birth subsequent to 'I-thought'. So its birth is secondary. Get rid of the primary cause and the secondary one will disappear by itself.

D.: How is that 'I-thought' to be checked from rising?

M.: By Self-quest.

D.: I try to understand but without success. Can I find the Self by means of *japa*? If so, please tell me how.

M.: What *japa*? Why should you make artificial *Japa*? You can find out the eternal and natural *japa* always going on within you.

D.: Some *upadesh* will probably help me.

M.: If I say "Do - Rama, Rama" to one who has not struggled through books like you, he will do it and stick to it. If I say so to one like you who have read much and are investigating matters, you will not do it for long, because you will think, "Why should I do it? Above all, who am I that should be repeating the *mantra*? Let me find who I am before I proceed further"; and so you will stop *japa* and begin investigation.

D.: It is said: The senses are out-going (*paranchikhani*); inward turned (is) sight (*avrittachakshuh*). What is *avrittachakshuh* (inward-turned sight)?

M.: It does not mean replacement of the eyeball in the opposite direction. What is *chakshuh*?

D.: The eye.

M.: Does the eye see or is it someone behind the eye that sees? If the eye could see, then does a corpse see? The one who is behind the eye sees through the eye. He is meant by the word *chakshuh*.

D.: Divya chakshuh is necessary to see the glory of God. This physical eye is the ordinary *chakshuh.*

M.: Oh! I see. You want to see million-sun-splendour and the rest of it!

D.: Can we not see the glory as million-sun-splendour?

M.: Can you see the single sun? Why do you ask for millions of suns?

D.: It must be possible to do so by divine sight. "Where the sun shines not, etc. That is My Supreme abode". Therefore there is a state where this sun is powerless. That state is that of God.

M.: All right. Find Krishna and the problem is solved.

D.: Krishna is not alive.

M.: Is that what you have learnt from the Gita? Does He not say that He is eternal? Of what are you thinking, His body?

D.: He taught others while alive. Those around Him must have realised. I seek a similar living Guru.

M.: Is Gita then useless after He withdrew His body? Did He speak of His body as Krishna?

Natwewaham jatu nasam ... (Never I was not....)

D.: But I want a living Guru who can say the truth first hand.

M.: The fate of the Guru will be similar to the fate of Krishna.

The questioner retired. Later, Sri Bhagavan said: Divine sight means Self-luminosity. The world *divya* shows it. The full word means the Self. Who is to bestow a divine eye? And who is to see? Again, people read in the books, "hearing, reflection and one-pointedness are necessary". They think that they must pass through *savikalpa samadhi* and *nirvikalpa samadhi* before attaining Realisation. Hence all these questions. Why should they wander in that maze? What do they gain at the end? It is only cessation of the trouble of seeking. They find that the Self is eternal and self-evident. Why should they not get that repose even this moment?

A simple man, not learned, is satisfied with *japa* or worship. A *jnani* is of course satisfied. The whole trouble is for the book-worms. Well, well. They will also get on.

Talk 337.

Mr K. R. V. Iyer: How is the mind to be purified?

M.: The *sastras* say: "By karma, *bhakti* and so on". My attendant asked the same question once before. He was told, "By karma dedicated to God". It is not enough that one thinks of God while doing the karma, but one must continually and unceasingly think of Him. Then alone will the mind become pure.

The attendant applies it to himself and says, "It is not enough that I serve Sri Bhagavan physically. But I must unceasingly remember Him".

To another person, who asked the same question, Bhagavan said: Quest of the Self, meaning, 'I am-the-body' idea must vanish. (*Atma vichara* = disappearance of *dehatma buddhi*)

23rd Jan3uary, 1937

Talk 338.

Mrs. Jennings, an American lady, asked a few questions:

D.: Is not affirmation of God more effective than the quest, "who am I?" Affirmation is positive, whereas the other is negation. Moreover, it indicates separateness.

M.: So long as you seek to know how to realise, this advice is given to find your Self. Your seeking the method denotes your separateness.

D.: Is it not better to say 'I am the Supreme Being' than ask 'Who am I?'

M.: Who affirms? There must be one to do it. Find that one.

D.: Is not meditation better than investigation?

M.: Meditation implies mental imagery, whereas investigation is for the Reality. The former is objective, whereas the latter is subjective.

D.: There must be a scientific approach to this subject.

M.: To eschew unreality and seek the Reality is scientific.

D.: I mean there must be a gradual elimination, first of the mind, then of the intellect, then of the ego.

M.: The Self alone is Real. All others are unreal. The mind and intellect do not remain apart from you.

The Bible says, "Be still and know that I am God". Stillness is the sole requisite for the realisation of the Self as God.

D.: Will the West ever understand this teaching?

M.: There is no question of time and space. Understanding depends on ripeness of mind. What does it matter if one lives in the East or in the West?

Sri Bhagavan referred the lady to a few stanzas in *Truth Revealed* and to *Thayumanavar.* She retired.

Later Sri Bhagavan said the whole Vedanta is contained in the two Biblical statements:

"I am that I AM" and "Be still and know that I am God."

Mr. K. S. N. Iyer, a Railway Officer, said to Sri Bhagavan that the compiler of *Cosmic Consciousness* considers realisation to be possible only within certain limits of age in an individual's life.

M.: Does anyone say "I must come into being before or after some age?" He is here and now. Statements like this are misleading because people come to believe that they cannot realise the Self in this incarnation and must needs take chances in another. It is all absurd.

Talk 339.

With regard to *Siva Visishtadvaita,* (*i.e., Saiva Siddhanta*), Sri Bhagavan said: *Garudoham bhavana* 'I am Garuda' - conception does not make a *garuda* of a man. All the same the poisonous effects of snake-bite are cured. Similarly with *Sivoham bhavana* (I-am-Siva) conception also. One is not transformed into Siva, but the ruinous effects of the ego are put an end to. Or the person retains his individuality but remains pure, *i.e.,* fit for constituting a part of the body of Siva. Becoming so he can enjoy the Supreme Bliss. That is liberation - say the *Saiva Siddhantis.* This simply betrays the love of their individuality and is in no way the true experience of liberation.

Talk 340.

Mr. Bose began, "After the return of body-consciousness ..."

M.: What is body-consciousness? Tell us that first. Who are you apart from consciousness? Body is found because there is body-consciousness which arises from 'I-consciousness' which again rises from consciousness.

Consciousness → 'I-consciousness' → body-consciousness → body.

There is always consciousness and nothing but that. What you are now considering to be body-consciousness is due to superimposition. If there is only consciousness and nothing but it, the meaning of the Scripture *Atmanastu kamaya sarvam priyam bhavati* - (All are dear because of the love of the Self) becomes clear.

A question arises, why there should be suicides in that case. Why does one do it? Because he is unhappy and desires to put an end to his unhappiness. He actually does it by ending the association with the body which represents all unhappiness. For there must be a killer to kill the body. He is the survivor after suicide. That is the Self.

Talk 341.

Mrs Jennings: Sri Bhagavan says that the state of Realisation is freedom from the tyranny of thoughts. Have not the thoughts got a place in the scheme of things - maybe on a lower plane?

M.: The thoughts arise from the 'I-thought' which in its turn arises from the Self. Therefore the Self manifests as 'I' and other thoughts. What does it matter if there are thoughts or no thoughts?

D.: Are good thoughts helpful for Realisation? Are they not authentic *via media*, a lower rung of the ladder, to Realisation?

M.: Yes - this way. They keep off bad thoughts. They must themselves disappear before the state of Realisation.

D.: But are not creative thoughts an aspect of Realisation and therefore helpful?

M.: Helpful only in the way said before. They must all disappear in the Self. Thoughts, good or bad, take you farther and not nearer, because the Self is more intimate than thoughts. You are Self, whereas the thoughts are alien to the Self.

D.: So the Self finally absorbs its own creation which had helped its Realisation. Whereas civilisation wrongly worships and so separates and 'short-circuits' its own creations which had helped its advance.

M.: Are you not distinct from thoughts? Do you not exist without them? But can the thoughts exist without you?

D.: Is civilisation generally, slowly but surely, advancing in the right direction towards this Self-Realisation?

M.: Civilisation is in the order of things. It will finally resolve itself - as all others - in the Realisation of the Self.

D.: Is a fine type of primitive man nearer to Realisation than a civilised man governed by intellect and thought?

M.: A realised man may look a savage, but a savage is not a realised man.

D.: Is it right to think that *all* that happens to us are God's ordainment, and therefore only good?

M.: Of course it is. Yet all others and God are not apart from the Self. How can thoughts of them arise when you remain as the Self?

D.: Is 'surrender' accepting all physical annoyances such as ants, mosquitoes, snakes, etc., and, in accepting, willing or ceasing to be really hurt by them?

M.: Whatever it is, is it apart from you, the seer or the thinker?

A Parsi lady from the audience intervened: If they are not apart, do we not feel the sting of the ants?

M.: Whom does the ant sting? It is the body. You are not the body. So long as you identify yourself with the body, you see the ants, plants, etc. If you remain as the Self, there are not others apart from the Self.

D.: The body feels the pain of the sting.

M.: If the body feels it, let it ask. Let the body take care of itself. How does it matter to you?

The American lady again: Does complete surrender mean that all noise and disturbance in our environment, even during meditation, must be accepted? Or should we seek a cave in a mountain for solitude? Did not Bhagavan do this?

M.: There is no going or returning. The Self is said to be unaffected by the elements, infinite, eternal. It cannot move. There is no place to move in for the Self.

D.: But, in the process of finding the Self, is this seeking external help spiritually legitimate?

M.: The error lies in the identification of the Self with the body. If Bhagavan is the body you may ask that body. But understand him whom you address as Bhagavan. He is not the body. He is the Self.

Then she referred to an article in *Harijan* where it is said that everything is God and nothing belongs to the individual, and so on.

M.: Everything, the individual, God and all are only the Self.

Then she read some lines from Shelley and asked if Shelley was not a realised soul.

Within a cavern of man's trackless spirit
Is throned an Image so intensely fair
That the adventurous thoughts that wander near it

Worship, and as they kneel, tremble and fear
The splendour of its presence, and the light
Penetrates their dreamlike frame
Till they become charged with the strength of flame.

M.: Yes. The lines are excellent. He must have realised what he wrote.

The lady then thanked Sri Bhagavan and retired.

Talk 342.

At 11 p.m. in the night a group of Andhras came from Guntur, consisting of a middle-aged woman with a sad but firm look, her mother and two men. They requested audience with Sri Bhagavan.

The woman said to Sri Bhagavan:

"When my son was in the womb my husband died. The son was born posthumous. He grew up all right for five years. Then he was attacked by infantile paralysis. When nine he was bedridden. Nevertheless he was bright and cheerful. For two years he was in that condition and now they say that he is dead. I know that he is only sleeping and will awake soon. When they said that he had collapsed I was shocked. I saw in a vision a *sadhu* who appeared to pass his hands over the child's body and the child awoke refreshed. I believe that *sadhu* is yourself. Please come and touch the boy so that he may get up," she prayed.

Sri Bhagavan asked what the doctor said.

She replied, "They say that he is dead. But what do they know? I have brought the boy all the way from Guntur to this place".

Someone asked: "How? Is the corpse brought here?"

She: They said that the corpse would be taken by paying special rates at ½ rupee per mile. We have paid Rs.150/- for it, and brought it as luggage.

M.: If your vision be correct the boy will wake up tomorrow.

She: Please touch him. May I bring him into the compound?

The others protested and persuaded them to leave.

They left and the next morning the corpse was reported to have been cremated.

When asked, Sri Bhagavan said: It is said of some saints that they revived the dead. They, too, did not revive all the dead. If that could be done there will be no world, no death, no cemetery, etc.

One man asked: The mother's faith was very remarkable. How could she have had such a hopeful vision and still be disappointed? Can it be a superimposition attendant on her child's love?

M.: She and her child not being real, how can the vision alone be a superimposition?

D.: Then how is it to be explained?

No answer.

Talk 343.

D.: Even as the hand is cut off, one must remain unaware of it because *Bhagavad Gita* declares that the Self is different from the body.

M.: Does *jnana* consist in being unaware of the pain of injury?

D.: Should he not remain unaware of pain?

M.: Major operations are performed under anaesthetics, keeping the patient unaware of the pain. Does the patient gain *jnana* too, at the same time? Insensibility to pain cannot be *jnana*.

D.: Should not a *jnani* (a sage) be insensible to pain?

M.: Physical pain only follows body-consciousness; it cannot be in the absence of body-consciousness. Mind, being unaware of the body, cannot be aware of its pains or pleasures. Read the story of Indra and Ahalya in *Yoga Vasishta*; there death itself is said to be an act of mind.

Pains are dependent on the ego; they cannot be without the 'I', but 'I' can remain without them.

Talk 344

D.: Vichara Sagara relates four obstacles to Self-Realisation.

M.: Why only four? Some say they are nine. Sleep is one of them. What is sleep? It is only the obverse of waking. It cannot be independent of waking. Sleep is unalloyed Self. Do not think you are awake: sleep cannot be, nor the three states either. Only forgetting the Self you say you dreamt. Can anything exist in the absence of the Self? Why do you leave it out and hold the non-self?

As the mind tends to go out turn it inwards then and there. It goes out owing to the habit of looking for happiness outside oneself; but the knowledge that the external objects are not the cause of happiness will keep it in check. This is *vairagya* or dispassion. Only after perfect *vairagya* the mind becomes steady.

The mind is only a mixture of knowledge and ignorance or of sleep and waking. It functions in five ways:

Kshipta (active);
Moodha (dull);
Vikshipta (distracted);
Kashaya (latent); and
Ekagrya (one-pointed).

Of these *kashaya* is only the latency of tendencies and not the tendencies themselves such as attachment, repulsion, etc.

Yourself being *ananda* (Bliss), why should you enjoy it saying, "Ah! How blissful!" This is *rasasvada.*

During the marriage ceremonies a virgin feels happy as a bride without experiencing the embrace of man: this is *rasasvada.*

D.: Jivanmukti (liberated while alive) itself being *ananda* . . . .

Sri Bhagavan interrupted: Do not look for *sastras*. What is *jivanmukti*? What is *ananda*? Liberation itself is in doubt. What are all these words? Can they be independent of the Self.

D.: Only we have no experience of all this.

M.: What is not, is always lost; what is, is ever present, here and now. This is the eternal order of things. Example: necklace round the neck.

Talk 345.

Sri Bhagavan continued, after interval: Destroy the power of mind by seeking it. When the mind is examined its activities cease automatically.

Looking for the source of mind is another method. The source may be said to be God or Self or consciousness.

Concentrating on one thought, all other thoughts disappear; finally that thought also disappears. It is necessary to be *aware* while controlling thoughts, otherwise it will lead to sleep.

D.: How to seek the mind?

M.: Breath-control may do as an aid but can never lead to the goal itself. While doing it mechanically, take care to be alert in mind and remember the 'I-thought' and seek its source. Then you will find that where breath sinks, there the 'I-thought' arises. They sink and rise together. The 'I-thought' also will sink along with breath. Simultaneously another luminous and infinite "I-I" will manifest and it will be continuous and unbroken. That is the goal. It goes by different names - God, Self, *Kundalini-Sakti*, consciousness etc., etc.

When the attempt is made it will of itself take you to the goal.

Talk 346.

Free will and Destiny last as long as the body lasts. But wisdom transcends both, for the Self is beyond knowledge and ignorance.

Talk 347.

The mind is a bundle of thoughts. The thoughts arise because there is the thinker. The thinker is the ego. The ego, if sought, will automatically vanish. The ego and the mind are the same. The ego is the root-thought from which all other thoughts arise.

Talk 348.

D.: There are times when persons and things take on a vague, almost transparent form, as in a dream. One ceases to observe them as from outside, but is passively conscious of their existence, while not actively conscious of any kind of selfhood. There is a deep quietness in the mind. Is it, at such times, ready to dive into the Self? Or is this condition unhealthy, the result of self-hypnotism? Should it be encouraged as a means of getting temporary peace?

M.: There is consciousness along with quietness in the mind; this is exactly the state to be aimed at. The fact that the question has been framed on this point, without realising that it is the Self, shows that the state is not steady but casual.

The word 'diving' is appropriate to the state of outgoing tendencies when the mind is to be diverted and turned within so as to dive below the surface of externalities. But when deep quietness prevails without

obstructing the consciousness, where is the need to dive? If the state be not realised as the Self, the effort to do so may be called 'diving'. The state may in that way be said to be suitable for realisation or 'diving'. Thus the last two questions in the paragraph are unnecessary.

D.: The mind continues to feel partial towards children, possibly because of the form sometimes used to personify the Ideal. How can this preference be outgrown?

M.: Hold the Self. Why think of children and reactions towards them?

D.: This third visit to Tiruvannamalai seems to have intensified the sense of egoism in me and made meditation less easy. Is this an unimportant passing phase or a sign that I should avoid such places hereafter?

M.: It is imaginary. This place or another is within you. Such imaginations must end so that the places have nothing to do with the activities of the mind. Even your surroundings are not of your own accord; they are there as a matter of course. You must rise above them and not get yourself involved.

Talk 349.

SRI SANKARA'S PATH TO SALVATION THROUGH DISCRIMINATION

A Note By Sri Maharshi

(In the current issue of *The Vision* is published the following note, being the translation by Mr. S. Krishna, M. A., of Sri Ramana Maharshi's preface to his translation of Sri Sankara's *Viveka Chudamani* or "Crown-gem of Discrimination").

Every being in the world yearns to be always happy, free from the taint of sorrow; and desires to get rid of bodily ailments which are not of his true nature. Further, everyone cherishes the greatest love for himself: and this love is not possible in the absence of happiness. In deep sleep, though devoid of everything, one has the experience of being happy. Yet, due to the ignorance of the real nature of one's own being, which is happiness itself, people flounder in the vast ocean of material existence forsaking the right path that leads to happiness and act under the mistaken belief that the way to be happy consists in obtaining the pleasures of this and the other world.

A SAFE GUIDE: But alas, that happiness which has not the taint of sorrow is not realised. It is precisely for the purpose of pointing out the straight path to happiness that God Siva took on the guise of Sri Sankaracharya, wrote the commentaries on the Triune Institutes (*Prasthana Traya*) of the Vedanta, which extol the excellence of this bliss; and demonstrated it by his own example in life. These commentaries, however, are of little use to those ardent seekers who are intent upon realising the bliss of absolution, but have not the scholarship for studying them.

It is for such as these that Sri Sankara revealed the essence of the commentaries in this short treatise, "The Crown-gem of Discrimination", explaining in detail the points that have to be grasped by those who seek absolution, and thereby directing them to the true and straight path.

LEARNING WON'T DO: Sri Sankara opens the theme by observing that it is hard indeed to attain human birth, and one should (having attained it) strive for the realisation of the bliss of liberation, which is verily the nature of one's being. By *jnana* or Knowledge alone is this bliss realised, and *jnana* is achieved only through *vichara* or steady enquiry. In order to know this method of enquiry, says Sri Sankara, one should seek the favour of a Guru, and proceeds to describe the qualities of the Guru and his *sishya* and how the latter should approach and serve his master. He further emphasises that in order to realise the bliss of liberation one's own individual effort is an essential factor. Mere book-learning never yields this bliss which can be realised only through enquiry or *vichara*, which consists of *sravana* or devoted attention to the precepts of the Guru, *manana* or deep contemplation and *Nididhyasana* or the cultivation of steady poise in the Self.

THE THREE PATHS: The three bodies - physical, subtle and causal - are non-self and are unreal. The Self, or 'I', is quite different from them. It is due to ignorance that the sense of the Self or the 'I' notion is foisted on that which is not Self, and this indeed is bondage. Since from ignorance arises bondage, from Knowledge ensues liberation. To know this from the Guru is *sravana*.

To reject the three bodies consisting of the five sheaths (physical, vital, mental, gnostic and blissful) as not 'I' and to extract through subtle

enquiry of "Who am I?" - even as the central blade of grass is delicately drawn out from its whorl - that which is different from all the three bodies and is existent as one and universal in the heart as *Aham* or 'I' and denoted by the words *Tvam* (in the Scriptural dictum - '*Tat-tvam-asi*' - That thou art). This process of subtle enquiry is *manana* or deep contemplation.

THE BEATITUDE: The world of name and form is but an adjunct of *Sat* or Brahman, and being not different from it is rejected as such and is affirmed as nothing else but Brahman. The instruction by the Guru to the disciple of the *Mahavakya, Tat-tvam-asi,* which declares the identity of the Self and the Supreme, is *upadesa.* The disciple is then enjoined to remain in the beatitude of *Aham-Brahman* - 'I' the Absolute. Nevertheless the old tendencies of the mind sprout up thick and strong and form an obstruction (to that state of beatitude). These tendencies are threefold and egoism, which is their root, flourishes in the externalised and differentiating consciousness caused by the forces of *vikshepa* or dissipation (due to *rajas*) and *avarana* or envelopment (due to *tamas*).

CHURNING THE MIND: To install the mind firmly in the heart until these forces are destroyed and to awaken with unswerving, ceaseless vigilance the true and cognate tendency which is characteristic of the Atman and is expressed by the dicta, *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am Brahman), and *Brahmaivaham* (Brahman alone am I) is termed *nididhyasana* or *atmanusandhana, i.e.*, constancy in the Self. This is otherwise called *Bhakti*, Yoga and *Dhyana*.

Atmanusandhana has been likened to churning the curd to draw forth butter, the mind being compared to the churning rod, the heart to the curd and the practice of constancy in the Self to the process of churning. Just as by churning the curd butter is extracted and by friction fire is kindled, even so, by unswerving vigilant constancy in the Self, ceaseless like the unbroken filamentary flow of oil, is generated the natural or changeless trance or *nirvikalpa samadhi*, which readily and spontaneously yields that direct, immediate, unobstructed and universal perception of Brahman, which is at once Knowledge and Experience and which transcends time and space.

LIMITLESS BLISS: This is Self-Realisation; and thereby is cut asunder the *hridaya-granthi* or the Knot of the Heart. The false delusions of ignorance, the vicious and age-long tendencies of the mind, which constitute this knot, are destroyed. All doubts are dispelled and the bondage of Karma is severed.

Thus has Sri Sankara described, in this "Crown-gem of Discrimination," *samadhi* or trance transcendent, which is the limitless bliss of liberation, beyond doubt and duality, and has at the same time indicated the means for its attainments. To realise this state of freedom from duality is the *summum bonum* of life: and he alone that has won it is a *jivanmukta* (the liberated one while yet alive), and not he who has merely a theoretical understanding of what constitutes *purushartha* or the desired end and aim of human endeavour.

FINAL FREEDOM: Thus defining a *jivanmukta*, he is declared to be free from the bonds of threefold Karmas (*sanchita, agami* and *prarabdha*). The disciple who has reached this stage then relates his personal experience. The liberated one is free indeed to act as he pleases, and when he leaves the mortal frame, attains absolution, and returns not to this "birth which is death".

Sri Sankara thus describes Realisation that connotes liberation as twofold, *i.e., jivanmukti* and *videha mukti* referred to above. Moreover, in this short treatise, written in the form of a dialogue between a Guru and his disciple, he has considered many relevant topics.

6th February, 1937

Talk 350.

While speaking to Mr. G. Shanmugham, a very sincere lawyer devotee, Bhagavan observed:

The *sastras* say that one must serve a Guru for 12 years for getting Self-Realisation. What does Guru do? Does he hand it over to the disciple? Is not the Self always realised? What does the common belief mean then? The man is always the Self and yet he does not know it. He confounds it with the non-self, *viz.*, the body etc. Such confusion is due to ignorance. If ignorance be wiped out the

confusion will cease to exist and the true knowledge will be unfolded. By remaining in contact with realised sages the man gradually loses the ignorance until its removal is complete. The eternal Self is thus revealed.

This is the meaning conveyed by the story of Ashtavakra and Janaka. The anecdotes differ in different books. We are not concerned with the names and the embellishments. The *tatva*, *i.e*., the moral, must not be lost sight of. The disciple surrenders himself to the master. That means there is no vestige of individuality retained by the disciple. If the surrender is complete all sense of individuality is lost and there is thus no cause for misery. The eternal being is only happiness. That is revealed.

Without understanding it aright, people think that the Guru teaches the disciple something like "TATVAMASI" and that the disciple realises "I am Brahman". In their ignorance they conceive of Brahman as something more huge and powerful than anything else. With a limited 'I' the man is so stuck up and wild. What will be the case if the same 'I' grows up enormous? He will be enormously ignorant and foolish! This false 'I' must perish. Its annihilation is the fruit of Guru *seva*. Realisation is eternal and it is not newly brought about by the Guru. He helps in the removal of ignorance. That is all.

7th February, 1937

Talk 351.

Dr. Subramania Iyer, Retired Health Officer of Salem, read out a passage which contained the instructions that one should know that the world is transitory, that worldly enjoyments are useless, that one should therefore turn away in disgust from them, restrain the senses and meditate on the Self to realise it.

Sri Bhagavan observed: How does one know the world to be transitory? Unless something permanent is held, the transitory nature of the world cannot be understood. Because the man is already the Self, and the Self is the Eternal Reality, his attention is drawn to it; and he is instructed to rivet his attention on the Eternal Reality, the Self.

Talk 352.

THE DIFFERENT CREEDS

The thought rises up as the subject and object. 'I' alone being held, all else disappears. It is enough, but only to the competent few.

The others argue, "Quite so. The world that exists in my sleep has existed before my birth and will exist after my death. Do not others see it? How can the world cease to be if my ego appears not?" The genesis of the world and the different schools of thought are meant to satisfy such people.

D.: Nevertheless, being only products of intellect they cannot turn the mind inward.

M.: Just for this reason the scriptures speak of "in-turned look", "one-pointed look" and so on.

The Self being always the Self, why should only a *dhira* be illumined? Does it mean a man of courage? No; *dhih* = intellect; *rah* = watch; protection. So *dhira* is the one who always keeps the mind inward bent without letting it loose.

8th February, 1937

Talk 353.

D.: What is *turiya*?

M.: There are three states only, the waking, dream and sleep. *Turiya* is not a fourth one; it is what underlies these three. But people do not readily understand it. Therefore it is said that this is the fourth state and the only Reality. In fact it is not apart from anything, for it forms the substratum of all happenings; it is the only Truth; it is your very Being. The three states appear as fleeting phenomena on it and then sink into it alone. Therefore they are unreal.

The pictures in a cinema show are only shadows passing over the screen. They make their appearance; move forward and backward; change from one to another; are therefore unreal whereas the screen all along remains unchanged. Similarly with paintings: the images are unreal and the canvas real. So also with us: the world-phenomena, within or without, are only passing phenomena

not independent of our Self. Only the habit of looking on them as being real and located outside ourselves is responsible for hiding our true being and showing forth the others. The ever-present only Reality, the Self, being found, all other unreal things will disappear, leaving behind the knowledge that they are no other than the Self.

Turiya only another name for the Self. Aware of the waking, dream and sleep states, we remain unaware of our own Self. Nevertheless the Self is here and now, it is the only Reality. There is nothing else. So long as identification with the body lasts the world seems to lie outside us. Only realise the Self and they are not.

Talk 354.

An American lady, a theosophist, asked: What is the means by which my approach to my master may be made nearer?

M.: How far away are you now from him?

D.: I am away from him. But I want to get closer to him.

M.: If you first know your Self, you may then find out how far away the other is. Who are you now? Are you the personality?

D.: Yes, I am the personality.

M.: Is the personality independent of the Self?

D.: Sometimes.

M.: At what times?

D.: I mean I have some flashes of the reality and, at other times, I do not have them.

M.: Who is aware of those flashes?

D.: I, I mean my personality.

M.: Is this personality aware as being apart from the Self?

D.: Which Self?

M.: Which do you consider the personality to be?

D.: The lower self.

M.: Then I mean to ask if the lower self is aware independently of the Higher Self?

D.: Yes, at times

M.: Who feels that she is away from the master, just now?

D.: The Higher Self.

M.: Does the Higher Self have a body and say that the master is away from it? Does it speak through your mouth? Are you apart from that?

D.: Can you kindly advise me how I can train myself to be aware of what I do even without the body, as in sleep?

M.: Awareness is your nature. In deep sleep or in waking, it is the same. How can it be gained afresh?

D.: But I do not remember what and how I did in my sleep.

M.: Who says "I do not remember"?

D.: I say now.

M.: You were the same then; why do you not say so in sleep?

D.: I do not remember what I say in sleep.

M.: You say, "I know, I remember", in the wakeful state. This same personality says "I did not know - I did not remember in sleep". Why does not this question arise in sleep?

D.: I do not know what happens in sleep. That is the reason I ask now.

M.: The question affects the sleeping phase and must be raised there. It does not affect the waking phase and there is no apparent reason for this question.

The fact is that you have no limitations in sleep and no question arises. Whereas now you put on limitations, identify yourself with the body and questions of this kind arise.

D.: I understand it, but do not realise it (i.e. unity in variety).

M.: Because you are in variety, you say you understand unity - that you have flashes, etc., remember things, etc.; you consider this variety to be real. On the other hand Unity is the reality, and the variety is false. The variety must go before unity reveals itself - its reality. It is always real. It does not send flashes of its being in this false variety. On the contrary, this variety obstructs the truth.

Then some others pursued the conversation.

M.: Removal of ignorance is the aim of practice, and not acquisition of Realisation. Realisation is ever present, here and now. Were it to be acquired anew, Realisation must be understood to be absent at one time and present at another time. In that case, it is not permanent, and therefore not worth the attempt. But Realisation is permanent and eternal and is here and now.

D.: Grace is necessary for the removal of ignorance.

M.: Certainly. But Grace is all along there. Grace is the Self. It is not something to be acquired. All that is necessary is to know its existence. For example, the sun is brightness only. He does not see darkness. Whereas others speak of darkness fleeing away on the sun approaching. Similarly, ignorance also is a phantom and not real. Because of its unreality, its unreal nature being found, it is said to be removed.

Again, the sun is there and also bright. You are surrounded by sunlight. Still if you would know the sun you must turn your eyes in his direction and look at him. So also Grace is found by practice alone although it is here and now.

D.: By the desire to surrender constantly, increasing Grace is experienced, I hope.

M.: Surrender once for all and be done with the desire. So long as the sense of doership is retained there is the desire; that is also personality. If this goes the Self is found to shine forth pure.

The sense of doership is the bondage and not the actions themselves.

"Be still and know that I am God." Here stillness is total surrender without a vestige of individuality. Stillness will prevail and there will be no agitation of mind. Agitation of mind is the cause of desire, the sense of doership and personality. If that is stopped there is quiet. There 'Knowing' means 'Being'. It is not the relative knowledge involving the triads, knowledge, subject and object.

D.: Is the thought "I am God" or "I am the Supreme Being" helpful?

M.: "I am that I am." "*I am*" is God - not thinking, "I am God". Realise "*I am*" and do not think *I am*. "Know I am God" - it is said, and not "Think I am God."

Later Sri Bhagavan continued: It is said "I AM that I AM". That means a person must abide as the 'I'. He is always the 'I' alone. He is nothing else. Yet he asks "Who am I?" A victim of illusion would ask "Who am I?" and not a man fully aware of himself. The wrong identity of the Self with the non-self makes you ask, "Who am I?"

Later still: There are different routes to Tiruvannamalai, but Tiruvannamalai is the same by whichever route it is gained. Similarly the approach to the subject varies according to the personality. Yet the Self is the same. But still, being in Tiruvannamalai, if one asks for the route it is ridiculous. So also, being the Self, if one asks how to realise the Self it looks absurd. You are the Self. Remain as the Self. That is all. The questions arise because of the present wrong identification of the Self with the body. That is ignorance. This must go. On its removal the Self alone *is*.

Talk 355.

D.: Does not education make a sage more useful to the world than illiteracy?

M.: Even a learned man must bow before the illiterate sage.

Illiteracy is ignorance: education is learned ignorance. Both of them are ignorant of their true aim; whereas a sage is not ignorant because there is no aim for him.

Talk 356.

D.: Why should there be sleep in the world?

M.: Owing to sin only.

D.: Can it be destroyed?

M.: Yes.

D.: It ends only after making itself felt, they say.

M.: Why then devotion to God?

D.: How can sleep be destroyed?

M.: Be not aware of its activities and effects.

D.: How can it be done?

M.: Only by enquiry of the Self.

Talk 357.

REMINISCENCES

Sri Bhagavan was recounting some of the incidents of His stay in Tiruvannamalai:

1. He was one day given a small speck of some substance on a leaf, to be licked off. It was said to be a good help for digestion. He licked it. Later He had His meal. After some time, the assembled persons appeared to be surrounded by Light (*tejomaya*). The experience passed away after some time.

2. While He was living in Pavalakunru. He intended to have a bath in one of the rills on the hillside. Palaniswami was informed of it. The news spread, that Jada Padmanabhaswami, who was living on the Hill, had arranged with Palaniswami to take Sri Bhagavan to the hill near his cottage. Palaniswami, without informing Sri Bhagavan, managed to take Him there. A great reception awaited Him. A seat was arranged for Him, milk and fruits were offered and J. P. waited on Him with great kindness.

3. J.P., though represented in the book *Self-Realisation* as having sought to injure Sri Bhagavan, was really kind to Him and his pranks were misunderstood to be acts of malice. His only weakness was that he wanted to make capital out of Sri Bhagavan for raising funds; which, of course, the Maharshi did not like. There was nothing wrong with J.P.

4. Madhavaswami, the attendant, asked if Sri Bhagavan remained without food for months in the underground cellar in the temple.

M.: Um! - Um! - food was forthcoming - Milk, fruits - but whoever thought of food.

5. While staying in the mango-tree cave Sri Bhagavan used to string garlands for the images in the temple, with lotuses, yellow flowers (*sarakonnai*) and green leaves.

6. After the completion of the Kalyanamantapam Sri Bhagavan had stayed there one night in disguise.

7. When He was sitting under a tree in the temple compound He was covered with dirt, for He never used to bathe. In the cold nights of

December He used to fold up the legs, place his head between his legs and remain there without moving. Early in the morning the layer of dirt on His body was soaked with dew and mist and appeared white. After drying up in the sun it appeared dark.

8. When living on the Hill Sri Bhagavan used to help in the *pooja* of J. P., ringing the bell, washing the vessels, etc., all along remaining silent. He also used to read medical works, *e.g.*, *Ashtanga Hridayam* in Malayalam and point out the treatment contained in the book for the patients who sought the other *sadhu's* help. That *sadhu* did not himself know how to read these works.

12th February, 1937

Talk 358.

A SCENE IN THE HALL

It is 8-20 p.m. Sri Bhagavan has returned after supper and stretched Himself on the sofa. The light is dim; there are three men sitting on the floor; one is busy copying something from a journal; another is wrapt in meditation; and the third is looking around, having nothing to do. The hall is silent but for occasional clearing of the throat by Sri Bhagavan.

Madhavaswami, the attendant devotee, slips in noiselessly with a sheaf of betels in hand. He moves to the table. Sri Bhagavan who is reclining on the sofa, sees him and calls out, yet kindly; "Sh, Sh; what are you doing?"

The attendant softly murmurs, "Nothing", leaves the betel there and fumbles hesitatingly.

M.: "I do not want it." (The attendant softly settles down on the floor). Sri Bhagavan: "Kasturi Pill - one after another, every day. The bottle will be empty - and more is ordered. I don't want it."

A devotee skilfully blames the *olla podrida* (அவியல்) of the day-meal for the indifferent health of Sri Bhagavan.

M.: "No - no - It was well made. It was good." silence, but for expectoration and eructation. After a few minutes, the attendant slips out and returns with a bottle in hand, goes near Sri Bhagavan and stretches out a pill saying: "Cummin seed-pill". Sri Bhagavan softly murmurs, "It contains

lime juice: lime juice is not good for this." One devotee Rangaswamy Iyengar has in the meantime become wide awake from his meditation and looks on. The attendant is still holding out his hand with the pill. Sri Bhagavan continues: "Who is to munch it?"

Rangaswamy Iyengar: "It need not be munched. It may be kept in the mouth and sucked." The attendant hastily agrees. "Yes - yes it is only to be sucked."

M.: "Give it to him" pointing to Rangaswami Iyengar. "Let him munch it or suck it. I do not want it."

The attendant returns disappointed and squats on the floor; again rises up.

M.: "Eh! - Eh! What do you do? I do not want." The attendant moves up to the medicine chest, murmuring "Kasturi pill - it will be effective". Sri Bhagavan: "I shall soon be right even without it. Do not take it out. Eh! - Eh! - keep it there - I won't take it - do what you like." The attendant again settles down and all remain silent before retiring to bed.

13th February, 1937

Talk 359.

At about 7-30 a.m. Sri Bhagavan was climbing up the hill after breakfast. Padananda went and prostrated, stood up and said, "All right, I have had *darsan* ... I shall return."

Sri Bhagavan smilingly, "Whose *darsan*? Why don't you say that you gave *darsan* to me?"

At about 9 a.m. a devotee from Poona (Mr. Parkhi) saluted Sri Bhagavan and read out his *ashtaka* praying to Sri Bhagavan for Grace. The piece finishes with a prayer for quick liberation (*jhatiti mukti*) and the devotee emphasised it.

M.: Mukti, i.e., liberation, is not to be gained hereafter. It is there for ever, here and now.

D.: I agree, but I do not experience it.

M.: The experience is here and now. One cannot deny one's own self.

D.: That means existence and not happiness.

M.: Existence = happiness = Being. The word *mukti* (liberation) is so provoking. Why should one seek it? He believes that there is bondage and therefore seeks liberation. But the fact is that there is no bondage but only liberation. Why call it by a name and seek it?

D.: True - but we are ignorant.

M.: Only remove ignorance. That is all there is to be done.

14th February, 1937

Talk 360.

The aristocratic gentleman from Lucknow has written to Mr. Paul Brunton that his wife has since lost that peace of mind which she had gained by her visits to Sri Bhagavan; so he desires that Sri Bhagavan may be pleased to restore the same peace.

When requested, Sri Bhagavan said, "It is due to weakness of mind that peace once gained is later lost."

Talk 361.

Mudaliar Swami, son of the lady who brings *bhiksha* every day to Sri Bhagavan, related the following interesting incident:

During the time Sri Bhagavan was staying in Virupaksha Cave, Sri Bhagavan and Mudaliar Swami were walking together behind the Skandasramam site. There was a huge rock about 15 feet high; it was a cleft, a girl - (a shepherdess) - was standing there crying. Sri Bhagavan asked the reason of her sorrow. She said, "A sheep of mine has slipped into this cleft; so I am crying." Sri Bhagavan descended into the cleft, took the sheep on his shoulders, climbed up to the surface and delivered the sheep to her. Mudaliar Swami says that it was a very remarkable feat for any human being.

Talk 362.

Mr Subbaramiah, a college professor from Nellore, asked about *mukti*.

M.: All questions relating to *mukti* are inadmissible; because *mukti* means release from bondage which implies the present existence of bondage. There is no bondage and therefore no *mukti* either.

D.: The *sastras* speak of it and its grades.

M.: The *sastras* are not meant for the wise because they do not need them; the ignorant do not want them. Only the *mumukshus* look up to the *sastras*. That means that the *sastras* are neither for wisdom nor for ignorance.

D.: Vasishta is said to be a *jivanmukta* whereas Janaka was a *videhamukta*.

M.: Why speak of Vasishta or Janaka? What about oneself?

There were many new visitors this day. Two of them were speaking of Ganapati Muni in Sri Bhagavan's presence. Sri Bhagavan put in a few words in their talk:

(1) Some say that *jnana* and *upasana* are the two wings with which to fly to *mukti*. What is *jnana*? What is *upasana*? *Jnana* is ever present. That is the ultimate goal also. When an effort is made the effort is called *upasana*; when it is effortless it is *jnana*, which is the same as *mukti*.

(2) After some discussion among themselves, a visitor said: Some Superior Power must help us to shake off the externalities.

Sri Bhagavan said: Who sees the externalities? Or do they say that they exist? If so let the world say that it exists.

Again, if the world is a projection from the interior it must be recognised that it is projected simultaneously with the 'I-thought'.

Either way the 'I' is the fundamental basis knowing which all else is known.

(3) Another said that Ganapati Muni used to say that he could even go to Indra-loka and say what Indra was doing but he could not go within and find the 'I'.

Sri Bhagavan added that Ganapati Muni used to say that it was easy to move forward but impossible to move backward.

Then Sri Bhagavan remarked: However far one goes there he is. Where is moving backward? The same truth is contained in the *mantra* in Isa-Upanishad.

(4) In reply to a query how Ganapati Muni became an *asu kavi* (inspired poet), Sri Bhagavan said; It is said that while he was making *tapasya* Siva appeared and gave him milk or honey to drink, after which he became *asu kavi*.

20th February, 1937

Talk 363.

A European civilian, Mr. Dodwell, Deputy Secretary, Finance, Madras Government, arrived with his wife before 1 p.m. and stayed in the hall till about 3-30 p.m.

The lady asked: The spiritual leaders in the West say that the spiritual centre is in India. Is there any contact among the spiritual leaders in India? Or is contact possible between the leaders of the East and the West?

M.: What do you mean by spiritual centre?

D.: The spiritual centre is the seat of spiritual leaders.

M.: What do you understand by 'spiritual leaders'?

D.: In the West there is a crisis. Scientific knowledge is far advanced. Such knowledge is used for generating destructive forces. There is a movement for making them constructive. When thus diverted it will be for the good of the world. The leaders of this movement are the redeemers.

M.: By 'spiritual leaders' we understand those who are 'spiritual' as opposed to 'physical'. Spirit is unlimited and formless. Such too is the spiritual centre. There is only one such centre. Whether in the West or in the East the centre cannot differ; nor has it any locality. Being unlimited it includes the leaders, the men, the world, the forces of destruction and of construction. There is no differentiation. You speak of contact because you are thinking of the embodied beings as spiritual leaders. The spiritual men are not bodies; they are not aware of their bodies. They are only spirit, limitless and formless. There is always unity among them and all others; nay, they comprise all.

The spirit is the Self. If the Self is realised, these questions cannot arise at all.

Mrs. Jinarajadasa from Adyar: Self Realisation sounds so easy, but yet is so difficult in practice.

M.: What can be easier? The Self is more intimate than anything else. If that cannot be realised, is it easy to realise what is apart and farther away?

D.: Self Realisation is so illusory. How can it be made permanent?

M.: The Self can never be illusory. It is the only Reality. That which appears will also disappear and is therefore impermanent. The Self never appears and disappears and is therefore permanent.

D.: Yes - true. You know that, in the Theosophical Society, they meditate to seek the masters to guide them.

M.: The Master is within. Meditation is meant for the removal of ignorance, of the wrong idea that he is without. If he be a stranger whose advent you await he is bound to disappear also. Where is the use of transient being like that?

However, as long as you think that you are an individual or that you are the body, so long the master also is necessary and he will appear with a body. When this wrong identification ceases the master will be found to be the Self.

There is a stanza in *Kaivalya:*

"My Lord! You had remained as my Self within, protecting me in all my past incarnations. Now, by your Grace, you have manifested yourself as my master and revealed yourself as the Self ".

Just see what happens in sleep. There is no ego, no India, no seekers, no master, etc.; and yet you are - and happy too.

The ego, India, seekers, etc., appear now; but they are not apart from nor independent of you.

There was a large group of visitors on account of the election holidays and some of these also joined in the discussion.

One of them asked about reincarnation.

M.: Reincarnation can only be so long as there is ignorance. There is no incarnation either now, nor was there before, nor will be hereafter. This is the truth.

D.: What is the ego-self?

M.: The ego-self appears and disappears and is transitory, whereas the real Self always abides permanent. Though you are actually the true Self yet you wrongly identify the real Self with the ego-self.

D.: How does the mistake come about?

M.: See if it has come about.

D.: One has to sublimate the ego-self into the true Self.

M.: The ego-self does not exist at all.

D.: Why does it give us trouble?

M.: To whom is the trouble? The trouble also is imagined. Trouble and pleasure are only for the ego.

D.: Why is the world so wrapped up in ignorance?

M.: Take care of yourself. Let the world take care of itself. See your Self. If you are the body there is the gross world also. If you are spirit all is spirit alone.

D.: It will hold good for the individual, but what of the rest?

M.: Do it first and then see if the question arises afterwards.

D.: Is there *avidya*?

M.: For whom is it?

D.: For the ego-self.

M.: Yes, for the ego. Remove the ego; *avidya* is gone. Look for it, the ego vanishes. The real Self alone remains. The ego professing *avidya* is not to be seen. There is no *avidya* in reality. All *sastras* are meant to disprove the existence of *avidya*.

D.: How did the ego arise?

M.: Ego is not. Otherwise do you admit of two selves? How can there be *avidya* in the absence of the ego? If you begin to enquire, the *avidya* which is already non-existent, will be found not to be or you will say it has fled away.

Ignorance pertains to the ego. Why do you think of the ego and also suffer? What is ignorance again? It is that which is non-existent. However the worldly life requires the hypothesis of *avidya*. *Avidya* is only our ignorance and nothing more. It is ignorance or forgetfulness of the Self. Can there be darkness before the Sun? Similarly, can there be ignorance before the Self-evident and Self-luminous Self? If you know the Self there will be no darkness, no ignorance and no misery.

It is the mind which feels the trouble, misery, etc. Darkness never comes nor goes. See the Sun and there is no darkness. Similarly, see the Self and *avidya* will be found not to exist.

D.: Sri Ramakrishna and others practised concentration.

M.: Concentration and all other practices are meant for recognising the absence, *i.e*., non-existence of ignorance. No one can deny his own being. Being is knowledge, *i.e*., awareness. That awareness implies absence of ignorance. Therefore everyone naturally admits non-existence of ignorance. And yet why should he suffer? Because he thinks he is this or that. That is wrong. "I am" alone is; and not "I am so and so", or "I am such and such". When existence is absolute it is right; when it is particularised it is wrong. That is the whole truth.

See how each one admits that he is. Does he look into a mirror to know his being? His awareness makes him admit his existence or being. But he confuses it with the body, etc. Why should he do so? Is he aware of his body in his sleep? No; yet he himself does not cease to be in sleep. He exists there though without the body. How does he know that he exists in sleep? Does he require a mirror to reveal his own being now? Only be aware, and your being is clear in your awareness.

D.: How is one to know the Self?

M.: "Knowing the Self" means "Being the Self". Can you say that you do not know the Self? Though you cannot see your own eyes and though not provided with a mirror to look in, do you deny the existence of your eyes? Similarly, you are aware of the Self even though the Self is not objectified. Or, do you deny your Self because it is not objectified? When you say "I cannot know the Self" it means absence in terms of relative knowledge, because you have been so accustomed to relative knowledge that you identify yourself with it. Such wrong identity has forged the difficulty of not knowing the obvious Self because it cannot be objectified; and you ask. "How is one to know the Self?" Your difficulty is centred in "How"? Who is to know the Self? Can the body know it?

Let the body answer. Who says that the body is perceived now?

In order to meet this kind of ignorance the *sastras* formulate the theory of God's *leela* or *krida* (*i.e*., play). God is said to emanate as the mind, the senses and the body and to play. Who are you to say that this play is a trouble to you? Who are you to question the doings of God?

Your duty is *to be:* and not *to be this or that*. "I AM that I AM" sums up the whole truth. The method is summed up in "BE STILL". What does "stillness" mean? It means "destroy yourself". Because any form or shape is the cause of trouble. Give up the notion that "I am so and so". Our *sastras* say: *ahamiti sphurati* (it shines as 'I').

D.: What is *sphurana* (shining)?

M.: (*Aham, aham*) 'I-I' is the Self; (*Aham idam*) "I am this" or "I and that" is the ego. Shining is there always. The ego is transitory; When the 'I' is kept up as 'I' alone it is the Self; when it flies at a tangent and says "this" it is the ego.

D.: Is God apart from the Self?

M.: The Self is God. "I AM" is God. "I am the Self, O Gudakesa!" (*Ahamatma Gudakesa*).

This question arises because you are holding the ego self. This will not arise if you hold the True Self. For the Real Self will not and cannot ask anything. If God be apart from the Self He must be a Self-less God, which is absurd.

D.: What is *namaskara* (prostration)?

M.: Prostration means "subsidence of the ego". What is "subsidence"? To merge into the source of its origin. God cannot be deceived by outward genuflexions, bowings and prostrations. He sees if the individuality is there or not.

Mr. Shamanna: Is there a sixth sense to feel "I AM"?

M.: Do you have it in your sleep? There is only one being functioning through the five senses. Or do you mean that each sense is independent of the Self and there are five selves admitting of a sixth to control them? There is a power working through these five senses. How can you deny the existence of such Power? Do you deny your existence? Do you not remain even in sleep where the body is not perceived? The same 'I' continues to be now; so we admit our existence, whether there is the body or not. The senses work periodically. Their work begins and ends. There must be a substratum on which their activities depend. Where do they appear and merge? There must be a single substratum. Were you to say that the single unit is not perceived, it is an admission of its being single: for you say that there is no second one to know it.

All these discussions are only to get rid of ignorance. When that is done everything will be clear. It is a matter of competence, or ripeness.

D.: Cannot Grace hasten such competence in a seeker?

M.: Leave it to Him. Surrender unreservedly. One of two things must be done. Either surrender because you admit your inability and also require a High Power to help you; or investigate into the cause of misery, go into the source and merge into the Self. Either way you will be free from misery. God never forsakes one who has surrendered. *Mamekam saranam vraja*.

D.: What is the drift of the mind after surrender?

M.: Is the surrendered mind raising the question? (Laughter.)

Talk 364.

The Nellore Professor asked about *visvarupa darsana*.

M.: Visvatma darsana is *visvarupa darsana i.e*., the universal Self of the cosmic Self is the cosmos. Sri Krishna started the discourse in Chapter II, saying, "I have no form". In Chapter XI, He says, "See my form as the Universe". Is it consistent? Again he says, "I transcend the three worlds", but Arjuna sees the three worlds in Him. Sri Krishna says, "I cannot be seen by men, Gods, etc."; yet Arjuna sees himself and the Gods in Him. No one could see and yet Arjuna was endowed with divine sight to see Him. Does it not look a maze of contradictions?

The answer is that the understanding is wrong. *Sthula dristi* on the physical plane is absurd. *Jnana dristi* (subtle understanding) is necessary. That is why Arjuna was given *divya chakshuh* (divine sight). Can such sight be gross? Will such interpretation lead you to a right understanding?

Sri Krishna says *Kalosmi*, 'I am Time'. Does Time have shape?

Again if the universe be His form should it not be one and unchanging? Why does He say to Arjuna, "See in me whatever you desire to see?" That means that His form is according to the desires of the seer. They speak of 'divine sight' and yet paint the scene, each according to his own view. There is the seer also in the seen. What is all this? Even a mesmerist can make you see strange scenes. You call this a trick, whereas the other you call divine. Why this difference? Anything seen cannot be real. That is the truth.

Talk 365.

As Sri Bhagavan was continuing in the same strain, a visitor asked how to overcome the identity of the Self with the body.

M.: What about sleep?

D.: There is ignorance prevailing.

M.: How do you know your ignorance in sleep? Did you exist in sleep, or not?

D.: I do not know.

M.: Do you deny your existence in sleep?

D.: I must admit it by my reasoning.

M.: How do you infer your existence?

D.: By reasoning and experience.

M.: Is reasoning necessary for experience? (Laughter)

D.: Is meditation analytical or synthetic?

M.: Analysis or synthesis are in the region of intellect. The Self transcends the intellect.

Talk 366.

Before leaving at 3-30 p.m., Mrs. Dodwell raised a second question, asking what is meant by *neti-neti*.

M.: There is now wrong identification of the Self with the body, senses, etc. You proceed to discard these, and this is *neti*. This can be done only by holding to the one which cannot be discarded. That is *iti* alone.

21st February, 1937

Talk 367.

A Marathi lady, a casual visitor then taking leave, was almost on the point of bursting into tears; she asked; I know that *mukti* is impossible in one life. Still may I not have peace of mind in this life?

The Master looked at her very kindly and said smiling softly: Life and all else are in Brahman alone. Brahman is here and now. Investigate.

D.: I am practising meditation for a number of years. Yet my mind is not steady and cannot be brought to bear on meditation.

M.: Again looked steadily at her and said: "Do it now and all will be right."

Talk 368.

A young girl of 9 or 10, whose mother is a Research Scholar in Sanskrit in the University of Madras, accompanied by Mr. Maurice Frydman met Sri Bhagavan in Palakothu at about 12 noon. Sri Bhagavan, as usual with Him, kindly smiled on her. She asked Sri Bhagavan: "Why is there misery on earth?"

M.: Due to Karma.

D.: Who makes Karma bear fruits?

M.: God.

D.: God makes us do Karma and gives bad fruits for bad Karma. Is it fair?

Sri Bhagavan almost laughed and was very pleased with her. Later he was coaxing her to read something on returning to the hall. Since then He is watching her.

22nd February, 1937

Talk 369.

A Marathi gentleman and wife, past middle age, are on a visit here. They are quiet and simple. Both of them tearfully took leave and the gentleman even sobbed out a prayer for Sri Bhagavan's Grace. Sri Bhagavan gazed at them, with his lips parted showing the row of white teeth. His eyes also had a tear in them.

Talk 370.

Sri Bhagavan was in the cattle-shed. People were working and he watched their work for a short time. Then someone came and said that a large number of visitors were waiting in the hall. Sri Bhagavan in His calm way said: "Yes - yes, you do your work. Let Me go for Mine. People are waiting for Me. Let Me go." - Then he left the place.

23rd February, 1937

Talk 371.

There was a group of three middle-aged Andhras on a visit to Sri Bhagavan. One of them kneeled and asked: I am performing *hathayoga*, namely *basti*, *dhauti*, *neti*, etc. I find a blood vessel hardened in the ankle. Is it a result of Yoga?

M.: The blood-vessel would have hardened under any circumstances. It does not trouble you as much now as it would otherwise. *Hathayoga* is a cleaning process. It also helps peace of mind, after leading you to *pranayama*.

D.: May I do *pranayama*? Is it useful?

M.: Pranayama is an aid for the control of mind. Only you should not stop with *pranayama*. You must proceed further to *pratyahara*, *dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi*. Full results are reaped finally.

Another of the group asked: How are lust, anger, acquisitiveness, confusion, pride and jealousy overcome?

M.: By *dhyana*.

D.: What is *dhyana*?

M.: Dhyana is holding on to a single thought and putting off all other thoughts.

D.: What is to be meditated upon?

M.: Anything that you prefer.

D.: Siva, Vishnu, and Gayatri are said to be equally efficacious. Which should I meditate upon?

M.: Any one you like best. They are all equal in their effect. But you should stick to one.

D.: How to meditate?

M.: Concentrate on that one whom you like best. If a single thought prevails, all other thoughts are put off and finally eradicated. So long as diversity prevails there are bad thoughts. When the object of love prevails only good thoughts hold the field. Therefore hold on to one thought only. *Dhyana* is the chief practice.

A little later Sri Bhagavan continued:

Dhyana means fight. As soon as you begin meditation other thoughts will crowd together, gather force and try to sink the single thought to which you try to hold. The good thought must gradually gain strength by repeated practice. After it has grown strong the other thoughts will be put to flight.

This is the battle royal always taking place in meditation.

One wants to rid oneself of misery. It requires peace of mind, which means absence of perturbation owing to all kinds of thoughts.

Peace of mind is brought about by *dhyana* alone.

D.: What is the need then for *pranayama*?

M.: Pranayama is meant for one who cannot directly control the thoughts. It serves as a brake to a car. But one should not stop with it, as I said before, but must proceed to *pratyahara, dharana* and *dhyana*. After the fruition of *dhyana*, the mind will come under control even in the absence of *pranayama*.

The *asanas* (postures) help *pranayama*, which helps *dhyana* in its turn, and peace of mind results. Here is the purpose of *hatha yoga*.

Later Sri Bhagavan continued:

When *dhyana* is well established it cannot be given up. It will go on automatically even when you are engaged in work, play or enjoyment. It will persist in sleep too.

Dhyana must become so deep-rooted that it will be natural to one.

D.: What rite or action is necessary for the development of *dhyana*?

M.: Dhyana is itself the action, the rite and the effort. It is the most intense and potent of all. No other effort is necessary.

D.: Is not *japa* necessary?

M.: Is *dhyana* not *vak* (speech)? Why is *japa* necessary for it? If *dhyana* is gained there is no need for anything else.

D.: Is not a vow of silence helpful?

M.: A vow is only a vow. It may help *dhyana* to some extent. But what is the good of keeping the mouth closed and letting the mind run riot. If the mind be engaged in *dhyana*, where is the need for speech?

Nothing is as good as *dhyana*. Should one take to action with a vow of silence, where is the good of the vow?

D.: What is *jnana-marga*?

M.: I have been saying it for so long. What is *jnana*? *Jnana* means realisation of the Truth. It is done by *dhyana*. *Dhyana* helps you to hold on to Truth to the exclusion of all thoughts.

D.: Why are there so many Gods mentioned?

M.: The body is only one. Still, how many functions are performed by it? The source of all the functions is only one. It is in the same way with the Gods also.

D.: Why does a man suffer misery?

M.: Misery is due to multifarious thoughts. If the thoughts are unified and centred on a single item there is no misery, but happiness is the result. Then, even the thought, "I do something" is absent; nor will there be an eye on the fruit of action.

Talk 372.

D.: Horripilation, sobbing voice, joyful tears, etc., are mentioned in *Atma Vidya Vilasa* and other works. Are these found in *samadhi*, or before, or after?

M.: All these are the symptoms of exceedingly subtle modes of mind (*vrittis*). Without duality they cannot remain. *Samadhi* is Perfect Peace where these cannot find place. After emerging from *samadhi* the remembrance of the state gives rise to these symptoms.

In *bhakti marga* (path of devotion) these are the precursors to *samadhi*.

D.: Are they not so in the path of *jnana*?

M.: May be. There is no definiteness about it. It depends on the nature of the individual. Individuality entirely lost, these cannot find a place. Even the slightest trace of it being present, these symptoms become manifest.

Manickavachagar and other saints have spoken of these symptoms. They say tears rush forth involuntarily and irrepressibly. Though aware of tears they are unable to repress them.

I had the same experience when I was staying Virupaksha cave.

D.: Sleep state is said to be the experience of Bliss, yet, on recollecting it the hairs do not stand on end. Why should they do so, if the *samadhi* state is recollected?

M.: Samadhi means sleep in waking state (*jagrat sushupti*). Bliss is overpowering and the experience is very clear, whereas it is different in sleep.

D.: Can we put it that in sleep there is no unhappiness, nor happiness, *i.e.*, the experience is negative not positive.

M.: But the recollection is positive "I slept happily," says the man. So there must be the experience of happiness in sleep.

D.: Does Bliss consist only in the absence of unhappiness, or is it anything positive?

M.: It is positive. Loss of unhappiness and rise of happiness are simultaneous.

D.: Can it be that the recollection of happiness in sleep is not clear and so there is no horripilation, etc.?

M.: The Bliss of *samadhi* is a perfectly clear experience and its recollection also is similar. But the experience of sleep is otherwise.

28th February, 1937

Talk 373.

H. H. The Maharajah of Mysore had a private interview with Sri Bhagavan in the newly built bathroom from 9-15 to 9-30 a.m. His Highness saluted Sri Bhagavan placing his head on Sri Bhagavan's feet and said:

I have read Sri Bhagavan's life and long had a desire to meet Him, but my circumstances are such that intentions of this kind cannot easily be carried into effect. Nor can I stay here as other disciples can, considering all my limitations. While I remain here for about 15 minutes, I shall now pray only for Thy Grace.

(On departure H. H. again saluted Sri Bhagavan as before and left after presenting two fine shawls and some money to the office).

13th March, 1937

Talk 374.

H. H. The Maharajah of Travancore had an interview from 4-30 p.m. to 5-15 p.m.

Their Highnesses The Maharajah and the Maharani of Travancore who arrived at Tiruvannamalai by the 8 a.m., train visited the Asramam at 4-15 p.m. The public were excluded from the hall where Bhagavan sat. Even devotees who were daily visiting the hall were by a sad mistake excluded from the interview. The Royal party was introduced to Sri Bhagavan by a retired District Magistrate. Two *aides-de-camp*, the Private Secretary to H. H. The Maharajah, some officials of the Travancore State and an Advocate of Mylapore were present. The discussion started by the District Magistrate went on about *manas*, concentration, Realisation, purpose of creation, etc. Her Highness put some questions expressing her doubts and they were all explained by Sri Bhagavan. H. H. The Maharajah also took part in the discussion. The whole conversation was in Tamil and Malayalam.

During the visit of the Royal Family of Travancore, Her Highness appeared very cultured, vivacious and conversant with Malayalam, Tamil and English. Most of the questions were put by Her Highness. One of the questions was:

D.: What is the purpose of creation?

M.: It is to give rise to this question; investigate the answer to this question, and finally abide in the supreme or rather the primal source of all, including the Self. The investigation will resolve itself into one of quest for the Self and cease only after the non-self is sifted away and the Self realised in its purity and glory.

D.: How is the investigation to start?

M.: The Self is plain to all and the starting also equally plain.

D.: What is the starting point for one in my stage of development.

M.: Each one has some method of *upasana* or *japa*. If that is pursued in all sincerity with due perseverance, it will automatically lead to the investigation of the Self.

[The writer of these notes was not present and the above was gathered from one of the attendants of Sri Maharshi.]

21st March, 1937

Talk 375.

A middle-aged Kanarese visitor asked about *akarma* (actionless act).

M.: Whatever one does after the ego has vanished is *akarma*.

Talk 376.

A learned Telugu visitor, who had composed a song in praise of Sri Bhagavan, read it out, placed it at His feet and saluted. After a time he asked for *upadesa*.

M.: The *upadesa* is contained in *Upadesa Saram*.

D.: But oral and personal instruction is valuable.

M.: If there be anything new and hitherto unknown *upadesa* will be appropriate. Here it happens to be stilling the mind and remaining free from thoughts.

D.: It looks impossible.

M.: But it is precisely the pristine and eternal state of all.

D.: It is not perceived in our everyday active life.

M.: Everyday life is not divorced from the Eternal State. So long as the daily life is imagined to be different from the spiritual life these difficulties arise. If the spiritual life is rightly understood, the active life will be found to be not different from it.

Can the mind be got at by the mind on looking for it as an object? The source of the mental functions must be sought and gained. That is the Reality.

One does not know the Self owing to the interference of thoughts. The Self is realised when thoughts subside.

D.: "Only one in a million pursues *sadhanas* to completion." (Bh. Gita, VII, 3).

M.: "Whenever the turbulent mind wavers, then and there pull it and bring it under control." (Bh. Gita, VI, 26.) "Seeing the mind with the mind" (*manasa mana alokya*), so proclaim the Upanishads.

D.: Is the mind an *upadhi* (limiting adjunct)?

M.: Yes.

D.: Is the seen (*drisya*) world real (*satya*)?

M.: It is true in the same degree as the seer (*drashta*), subject, object and perception form the triad (*triputi*). There is a reality beyond these three. These appear and disappear, whereas the truth is eternal.

D.: These *triputi sambhava* are only temporal.

M.: Yes, if one recognises the Self even in temporal matters these will be found to be non-existent, rather inseparate from the Self; and they will be going on at the same time.

22nd March, 1937

Talk 377.

A middle-aged Andhra visitor: A man is said to be divine. Why then does he have regrets?

M.: Divinity refers to the essential nature. The regrets are of *Prakriti*.

D.: How is one to overcome regrets?

M.: By realising the Divinity in him.

D.: How?

M.: By practice.

D.: What kind of practice?

M.: Meditation.

D.: Mind is not steady while meditating.

M.: It will be all right by practice.

D.: How is the mind to be steadied?

M.: By strengthening it.

D.: How to strengthen it?

M.: It grows strong by *satsanga* (the company of the wise).

D.: Shall we add prayers, etc.?

M.: Yes.

D.: What of the one who has no regrets?

M.: He is an accomplished Yogi. There is no question about him.

D.: People cite disasters, *e.g.*, earthquakes, famines, etc., to disprove God. How shall we meet their contention?

M.: Wherefrom have they come - those who argue?

D.: They say, "Nature".

M.: Some call it "Nature" - others "God".

D.: Are we to keep anything against a rainy day; or to live a precarious life for spiritual attainments?

M.: God looks after everything.

27th March, 1937

Talk 378.

In a conversation with an Andhra visitor, Sri Bhagavan quoted:

Asamsayam mahabaho mano durnigraham chalam
Abhyasena tu kaunteya vairagyena cha grhyate
— Bh. Gita, Ch. VI, 35

Without doubt, O mighty-armed Hero,
the mind is restless, hard to curb.
Yet by constant effort, Partha,
matched with detachment - curbed it *is*.

To explain *vairagya* Sri Bhagavan again quoted:

Sankalpaprabhavan kamams tyaktva sarvan aseshatah
Manasaivendriyagramam viniyamya samantatah
— (Ch. VI, 24)

Having cast out without remains
all longing born of thought for self,
Having drawn in by mind alone
his team of senses from all sides -

As for practice (*abhyasa*):

Sanaissanairuparamet buddhya dhritigrhitaya
Atmasamstham manah krtva na kinchidapi chintayet
— (VI - 25)

By slow approaches let him come
to rest, with patient, rock-poised Will;
His mind at home in Selfhood pure,
Let him create no *thought* at all.

Again for *jnana*:

Yato yato nischarati manas chanchalam asthiram
Tatastato niyamyaitad atmanyeva vasam nayet

— (VI - 26)

Though over and over the fickle mind,
all restlessness, a-wandering goes,
Still over and over let his regain
control, and poise it back in Self.

2nd April, 1937

Talk 379.

One Tirumalpad of Nilambur, a Malayali gentleman, asked Sri Bhagavan for an explanation of *Atma Vidya*. (Knowledge of the Self.)

M.: Sri Bhagavan explained this short piece of 5 stanzas as follows:

Chidambaram is the famous place of pilgrimage associated with Nandanar who sang that *Atma Vidya* is most difficult of attainment. Muruganar (a long-standing devotee of Sri Bhagavan) began however that *Atma Vidya* is the easiest of attainments. *Ayye atisulabham* is the burden of the song.

In explanation of this extraordinary statement, he argued that *Atma* being the Self is eternally obvious even to the least of men. The original statement and the subsequent reasoning are incompatible because there need be no *attainment* if the Self is the substratum of all selves and so obvious too. Naturally he could not pursue the theme further and laid the first four lines composed by him before Sri Bhagavan for completion.

Sri Bhagavan admitted the truth of the disciple's statement and pointed out why the Self, though obvious, is yet hidden. It is the wrong identity of the Self with the body, etc.

D.: How did the wrong identity arise?

M.: Due to thoughts. If these thoughts are put an end to, the real Self should shine forth of itself.

D.: How are these thoughts to be ended?

M.: Find out their basis. All of them are strung on the single 'I-thought'. Quell it; all others are quashed. Moreover there is no use knowing all except the Self. If the Self is known all others become known. Hence is Self-Realisation the primary and sole duty of man.

D.: How to quell the 'I-thought'?

M.: If its source is sought it does not arise, and thus it is quelled.

D.: Where and how to find it?

M.: It is in fact the consciousness which enables the individuals to function in different ways. Pure Consciousness is the Self. All that is required to realise the Self is to "Be Still."

D.: What can be easier than that?

M.: So *Atma Vidya* is the easiest of attainment.

Talk 380.

A European gentleman asked: How do you answer the question, "Who are you?"

M.: Ask yourself the question, "Who am I?"

D.: Please tell me how you have found it. I shall not be able to find it myself. (The 'I' is the result of biological forces. It results in silence. I want to know how the Master finds it.)

M.: Is it found only by logic? The scientific analysis is due to intellect.

D.: According to J. C. Bose, nature does not make any difference between a worm and a man.

M.: What is Nature?

D.: It is that which exists.

M.: How do you know the existence?

D.: By my senses.

M.: 'My' implies your existence. But you are speaking of another's existence. You must exist to speak of "my senses". There cannot be 'my' without 'I'.

D.: I am a poor creature. I come to ask you, Great Master that you are, what this existence is. There is no special significance in the word *existence*. He exists, I exist and others exist. What of that?

M.: The existence of anyone posited, shows your own existence. "Existence is your nature."

D.: There is nothing strange in anything existing.

M.: How do you know its existence - rather than your own existence?

D.: What is new in the existence of anything? I take up your book and read there that the one question one should ask oneself is "Who am I"? I want to know "Who are you?" I have my own answer. If another says the same, and so too, millions of others, there is the probability of the Self. I want a positive answer for the question and no playing with words.

M.: In this way you are in the region of probabilities at the best.

D.: Yes. There are no certainties. Even God cannot be proved to be absolute certainty.

M.: Leave God alone for the time being. What of yourself?

D.: I want confirmation of the Self.

M.: You seek the confirmation from others. Each one though addressed as 'you', styles himself 'I'. The confirmation is only from 'I'. There is no 'you' at all. All are comprised in 'I'. The other can be known only when the Self is posited. The others do not exist without the subject.

D.: Again, this is nothing new. When I was with Sir C. V. Raman he told me that the theory of smell could be explained from his theory of light. Smell need no longer be explained in terms of chemistry. Now, there is something new; it is progress. That is what I mean, when I say that there is nothing new in all the statements I hear now.

M.: 'I' is never new. It is eternally the same.

D.: Do you mean to say that there is no progress?

M.: Progress is perceived by the outgoing mind. Everything is still when the mind is introverted and the Self is sought.

D.: The Sciences - what becomes of them?

M.: They all end in the Self. The Self is their finality.

(It was 5 p.m. Sri Bhagavan left the hall and the gentleman left for the station).

Talk 381.

Mr. Bose, the Bengali Engineer, asked the meaning of the last stanza of *Atma Vidya* (Knowledge of the Self). Sri Bhagavan explained on the following lines:

There is the world perceived, the perception is only apparent; it requires location for existence and light. Such *existence* and *light* are simultaneous with the rise of mind. So the physical existence and illumination are part of mental existence and illumination. The latter is not absolute, for the mind rises and sinks. The mind has its substratum in the Self which is self-evident, *i.e.* its existence and self-luminosity are obvious. That is absolute being, continuous in sleep, waking and dream states also.

The world consists of variety, which is the function of the mind. The mind shines by reflected light - *i.e*. light reflected from the self. Just as the pictures in a cinema show are seen only in diffused, *i.e*. artificial light, but not in a strong glare or in thick darkness, so also the world pictures are perceptible only in diffused, *i.e*. reflected light of the Self through the darkness of *avidya* (ignorance). The world cannot be seen either in pure ignorance as in sleep, or in pure light as in Self-Realisation. *Avidya* is the Cause of variety.

The Engineer said that he understood it only intellectually.

M.: Because intellect holds you at present, *i.e*. you are in the grip of intellect in the waking state when you discuss these matters.

Later it was added that Grace is needed for Realisation.

The Engineer asked how Grace has to be got.

M.: Grace is the Self. It is not manifest because of ignorance prevailing. With *sraddha*, it will become manifest.

Sraddha, Grace, Light, Spirit are all synonymous with the Self.

5th April, 1937

Talk 382.

A Telugu gentleman, quiet in look, but learned in philosophy, asked Sri Bhagavan about *manolaya.*

Sri Bhagavan said that everything is contained in *Upadesa Saram*, a copy of which the man was holding in his hand.

D.: What is mind?

M.: See what it is.

D.: It is *sankalpa vikalpatmaka* (made up of thoughts and their changes).

M.: Whose *sankalpa* (thought)?

D.: Sankalpa is the nature of the mind.

M.: Of what is the *sankalpa*?

D.: Of the externalities.

M.: Quite so. Is that your nature?

D.: It is of the mind.

M.: What is your nature?

D.: Suddha Chaitanya (Pure Conscious Light).

M.: Then why do you worry about *sankalpa* and the rest.

D.: The mind is admitted to be changing and unsteady (*chanchala* and *asthira*).

M.: It is also said in the same place that the mind is to be introverted and made to merge into the Self; that the practice must be long because it is slow; and must be continued until it is totally merged in the Self.

D.: I want *prasad, i.e.*, Grace, for it.

M.: It is always with you. All that is required of you is not to confound yourself with the extrovert mind but to abide as the Self. That is *prasad.*

The gentleman saluted and retired.

Talk 383.

Swami Lokesananda, a *sanyasi*, asked Sri Bhagavan: Is there *prarabdha* for a *jivanmukta*?

M.: Who is the questioner? From whom does the question proceed? Is it a *jivanmukta* who is asking?

D.: No, I am not a *mukta* as yet.

M.: Then why not let the *jivanmukta* ask the question for himself?

D.: The doubt is for me.

M.: Quite so. The *ajnani* has doubt but not a *jnani*.

D.: According to the creed that there is no creation (*ajatavada*), the explanations of Sri Bhagavan are faultless; but are they admissible in other schools?

M.: There are three methods of approach in *Advaita vada*.

(1) The *ajatavada* is represented by no loss, no creation, no one bound, no *sadhaka*, no one desirous of liberation, no liberation. This is the Supreme Truth. (*Mandukya Karika*, II - 32).

According to this, there is only One and it admits of no discussion.

(2) *Drishti Srishtivada* is illustrated thus:- Simultaneous creation. There are two friends sleeping side by side. One of them dreams that he goes to Benares with his friend and returns. He tells his friend that both of them have been in Benares. The other denies it. That statement is true from the standpoint of one and the denial from that of the other.

(3) *Srishti Drishtivada* is plain (Gradual creation and knowledge of it).

Karma is posited as past karma, etc., *prarabdha, agami* and *sanchita*. There must be *kartritva* (doership) and *karta* (doer) for it. Karma (action) cannot be for the body because it is insentient. It is only so long as *dehatma buddhi* ('I-am-the-body idea') lasts. After transcending *dehatma buddhi* one becomes a *jnani*. In the absence of that idea (*buddhi*) there cannot be either *kartritva* or *karta*. So a *jnani* has no karma. That is his experience. Otherwise he is not a *jnani*. However an *ajnani* identifies the *jnani* with his body, which the *jnani* does not do. So the *ajnani* finds the *jnani* acting, because his body is active, and therefore he asks if the *jnani* is not affected by *prarabdha*.

The scriptures say that *jnana* is the fire which burns away all karma (*sarvakarmani*). *Sarva* (all) is interpreted in two ways: (1) to include *prarabdha* and (2) to exclude it. In the first way: if a man with three wives dies, it is asked. "can two of them be called widows and the third not?" All are widows. So it is with *prarabdha, agami* and *sanchita*. When there is no *karta* none of them can hold out any longer.

The second explanation is, however, given only to satisfy the enquirer. It is said that all karma is burnt away leaving *prarabdha* alone. The body is said to continue in the functions for which it

has taken its birth. That is *prarabdha*. But from the *jnani's* point of view there is only the Self which manifests in such variety. There is no body or karma apart from the Self, so that the actions do not affect him.

D.: Is there no *dehatma buddhi* (I-am-the-body idea) for the *jnani*? If, for instance, Sri Bhagavan be bitten by an insect, is there no sensation?

M.: There is the sensation and there is also the *dehatma buddhi*. The latter is common to both *jnani* and *ajnani* with this difference, that the *ajnani* thinks *dehaiva Atma* (only the body is myself), whereas the *jnani* knows all is of the Self (*Atmamayam sarvam*), or (*sarvam khalvidam Brahma*) all this is Brahma. If there be pain let it be. It is also part of the Self. The Self is *poorna* (perfect).

Now with regard to the actions of the *jnani*, they are only so-called because they are ineffective. Generally the actions get embedded as *samskaras* in the individual. That can be only so long as the mind is fertile, as in the case of the *ajnani*. With a *jnani* the mind is surmised; he has already transcended the mind. Because of his apparent activity the mind has to be inferred in his case, and that mind is not fertile like that of an *ajnani*. Hence it is said that a *jnani's* mind is Brahman. Brahman is certainly no other than the *jnani's* mind. The *vasanas* cannot bear fruit in that soil. His mind is barren, free from *vasanas*, etc.

However, since *prarabdha* was conceded in his case, *vasanas* also must be supposed to exist. If they exist they are only for enjoyment (*bhogahetu*). That is to say, actions bear twofold fruits, the one for enjoyment of their fruits and the other leaving an impress on the mind in the form of *samskaras* for subsequent manifestation in future births. The *jnani's* mind being barren cannot entertain seeds of karma. His *vasanas* simply exhaust themselves by activities ending in enjoyment only (*bhogahetuka karma*). In fact, his karma is seen only from the *ajnani's* standpoint. He remains actionless only. He is not aware of the body as being apart from the Self. How can there be liberation (*mukti*) or bondage (*bandha*) for him? He is beyond both. He is not bound by karma, either now or ever. There is no *jivanmukta* or *videhamukta* according to him.

D.: From all this it looks as if a *jnani* who has scorched all the *vasanas* is the best and that he would remain inactive like a stock or stone.

M.: No, not necessarily. *Vasanas* do not affect him. Is it not itself a *vasana* that one remains like a stock or stone? *Sahaja* is the state.

Talk 384.

The conversation turned on *vasanas*. Sri Bhagavan said that good tendencies and bad ones (*suvasana* and *kuvasana*) are concomitant - the one cannot exist without the other. Maybe that the one class predominates. Good tendencies (*suvasana*) are cultivated and they must also be finally destroyed by *jnana*.

A young prodigy was mentioned. Sri Bhagavan remarked that latent impressions of previous births (*purva janma samskara*) were strong in him.

D.: How does it manifest as the ability to cite well-known saints? Is it *vasana* in the form of a seed only?

M.: Yes. Predisposition (*samskara*) is acquired knowledge and kept in stock. It manifests under favourable circumstances. One with strong *samskara* understands the thing when presented to him much quicker than another with no *samskara* or weak *samskara*.

D.: Does it hold good with inventors also?

M.: "There is nothing new under the sun." What we call inventions or discoveries are merely rediscoveries by competent men with strong *samskara* in the directions under consideration.

D.: Is it so with Newton, Einstein, etc.?

M.: Yes. Certainly. But the *samskaras*, however strong, will not manifest unless in a calm and still mind. It is within the experience of everyone that his attempts to rake up his memory fail, whereas something flashes in the mind when he is calm and quiet. Mental quiet is necessary even for remembrance of forgotten things. The so-called genius is one who worked hard in his past births and acquired knowledge and kept it in store as *samskaras*. He now concentrates his mind until it merges in the subject. In that stillness the submerged ideas flash out. That requires favourable conditions also.

6th April, 1937

Talk 385.

Mr. Vankata Rao, an Andhra gentleman, in the course of conversation with Sri Bhagavan, was told:

"Until you gain *jnana* you cannot understand the state of a *jnani*. There is no use asking about the work of *Isvara* and the rest. Some ask why Siva went naked in Daruka forest and spoiled the chastity of the *rishi's* wives.

The *puranas* which record this incident have also said that Siva had previously saved the *Devas* and the universe by consuming the poison *halahala* at the time of churning the ocean of milk. He, who could save the world from the deadly poison and lead the sages to emancipation, had also wandered nude amongst their women. Their actions are incomprehensible to ordinary intellects. One must be a *jnani* to understand a *jnani* or *Isvara*."

D.: Should we not learn the *jnani's* ways and imitate them?

M.: It is no use. *Vasanas* are of four kinds:

(1) Pure (*Suddha*), (2) Impure (*malina*), (3) Mixed (*madhya*) and (4) Good (*Sat*), according as the *jnanis* are the Supreme (*varishta*), the best (*variya*), better (*vara*), and good (*vit*). Their fruits are reaped in three ways: (1) of our own will (*swechha*), and by others' will (*parechha*) and involuntarily (*anichha*). There have been *jnanis* like Gautama, Vyasa, Suka and Janaka.

D.: Was Vyasa also a *jnani*?

M.: Yes. Certainly.

D.: Why then did the bathing angels don clothes when he appeared before them, but not when Suka passed?

M.: That same Vyasa sent Suka to Janaka for instruction; Suka was tested by Janaka and finally he returned convinced of Vyasa's greatness.

D.: Is *jnana* the same as *arudha*?

M.: So it is.

D.: What is the relation between *bhakti* and *jnana*?

M.: Eternal, unbroken, natural state is *jnana*. Does it not imply love of Self? Is it not *bhakti*?

D.: Idol worship does not seem good. They worship the formless God in Islam.

M.: What is their conception of God?

D.: As Immanence, etc.

M.: Is not God even then endowed with attributes? Form is only one kind of attribute. One cannot worship God without some notions. Any *bhavana* premises a God with attributes (*saguna*). Moreover, where is the use of discussing the form or formlessness of God? Find out if you have a form. You can then understand God.

D.: I admit I have no form.

M.: All right. You have no form in sleep, but in the waking state you identify yourself with a form. See which is your real state. That is understood to be without form on investigation. If you know your Self to be formless by your *jnana*, should you not concede the same amount of *jnana* to God and understand Him to be formless?

D.: But there is the world for God.

M.: How does the world appear? How are we? Knowing this, you know God. You will know if He is Siva, or Vishnu or any other or all put together.

D.: Is *Vaikuntha* in *Paramapada*, *i.e.*, in the transcendent Self?

M.: Where is *Paramapada* or *Vaikuntha* unless in you?

D.: Vaikuntha, etc., appear involuntarily.

M.: Does this world appear voluntarily?

The questioner returned no answer.

M.: The self-evident 'I', ignoring the Self, goes about seeking to know the non-Self. How absurd!

D.: This is *Samkhya* Yoga. Being the culmination of all kinds of other yogas, how can it be understood to start with? Is not *bhakti* antecedent to it?

M.: Has not Sri Krishna started the Gita with *Sankhya*?

D.: Yes. I understand it now.

Talk 386.

D.: In Sri Ramakrishna's *Life* it is said that an idol, Ramlal was animate. Is it true?

M.: Can you account for the animation of this body? Is the movement of the idol more mysterious than the movement of this body?

D.: Metal does not move itself.

M.: Is not the body a corpse? You will probably consider it a mystery if the corpse moves. Is that so?

Talk 387.

Three persons came on a short visit; the eldest of them asked: There is one process of creation mentioned in the Upanishads and another in Puranas. Which of them is true?

M.: They are many, and meant to indicate that the creation has a cause and a creator should be posited so that one might seek the cause. The emphasis is on the purpose of the theory and not on the process of creation. Moreover, the creation is perceived by someone. There are no objects without the subject, *i.e*., the objects do not come and tell you that they are, but it is you who says that there are the objects. The objects are therefore what the seer makes of them. They have no existence independent of the subject. Find out what you are and then you understand what the world is. That is the object of the theory.

D.: The soul is only a small particle whereas the creation is so huge. How can we surmise it?

M.: The particle speaks of the huge creation; where is the contradiction?

Talk 388.

Later Sri Bhagavan continued:

There are so many theories, scriptural and scientific. Have they reached any finality? They cannot. Brahman is said to be subtler than the subtlest, wider than the widest. *Anu* is an atom, infinitesimal. It ends in subtle perception. The subtlety is of the *sukshma* body, *i.e*., the mind. Beyond the mind there is the Self. The greatest of things are also conceptions, the conceptions are of the mind; beyond the mind there is the Self. So the Self is subtler than the subtlest.

There may be any number of theories of creation. All of them extend outwardly. There will be no limit to them because time and space are unlimited. They are however only in the mind. See the mind; time and space are transcended and the Self is realised.

Creation is explained scientifically or logically to one's own satisfaction. But is there any finality about it? Such explanations are called *krama srishti* (gradual creation).

On the other hand, *drishti srishti* (simultaneous or sudden creation) is *yugapad srishti*. Without the seer there are no objects seen. Find the seer and the creation is comprised in him. Why look outward and go on explaining the phenomena which are endless?

Talk 389.

With regard to presents to Sri Bhagavan, He observed: Why do they bring presents? Do I want them? Even if I refuse they thrust presents on me. What for? If I accept them I must yield to their wishes. It is like giving a bait to catch the fish. Is the angler anxious to feed the fish? No, he is anxious to feed on the fish.

Swami Lokesananda, a *sannyasi:* What is meant by *jnana* and *vijnana*?

M.: These words may mean differently according to the context.

Jnana = *samanya jnana* or Pure consciousness. *Vijnana* = *Visesha jnana*. *Visesha* may be (1) worldly (relative knowledge); and (2) transcendental (Self-Realisation).

Mind is necessary for *visesha*; it modifies the purity of absolute consciousness. So *vijnana* represents intellect and the sheath composing it, *i.e.*, relative knowledge. In that case *jnana* is common (*samanya*) running through *vijnana samjnana, prajnana, ajnana, mati, dhirti* - different modes of knowledge (*vide: Aitareyopanishad,* Chapter 3) or *jnana* is *paroksha* (hearsay) and *vijnana* is *aparokska* (direct perception) as in *jnana vijnana triptatma,* one perfectly content with *jnana* and *vijnana*.

D.: What is the relation between Brahman and *Isvara*?

M.: Brahman is called *Isvara* in relation to the world.

D.: Is it possible to speak to *Isvara* as Sri Ramakrishna did?

M.: When we can speak to each other why should we not speak to *Isvara* in the same way?

D.: Then why does it not happen with us?

M.: It requires purity and strength of mind and practice in meditation.

D.: Does God become evident if the above conditions exist?

M.: Such manifestations are as real as your own reality. In other words, when you identify yourself with the body as in *jagrat* you see gross objects; when in subtle body or in mental plane as in *svapna*, you see objects equally subtle; in the absence of identification as in *sushupti* you see nothing. The objects seen bear a relation to the state of the seer. The same applies to visions of God.

By long practice the figure of God, as meditated upon, appears in dream and may later appear in *jagrat* also.

D.: Is that the state of God-realisation?

M.: Listen to what happened once, years ago.

There was a saint by name Namdev. He could see, talk and play with Vithoba as we do with one another. He used to spend most of his time in the temple playing with Vithoba.

On one occasion the saints had assembled together, among whom was one Jnandev of well-established fame and eminence. Jnandev asked Gora Kumbhar (a potter-saint) to use his proficiency in testing the soundness of baked pots and find out which of the assembled saints was properly baked clay. So Gora Kumbhar took his stick and gently struck each one's head in joke as if to test. When he came to Namdev the latter protested in a huff; all laughed and hooted. Namdev was enraged and he sought Vithoba in the temple. Vithoba said that the saints knew best; this unexpected reply upset Namdev all the more.

He said: You are God. I converse and play with you. Can there be anything more to be gained by man?

Vithoba persisted: The saints know.

Namdev: Tell me if there is anything more real than you.

Vithoba: We have been so familiar with each other that my advice will not have the desired effect on you. Seek the beggar-saint in the forest and know the truth.

Accordingly Namdev sought out the particular saint mentioned by Vithoba. Namdev was not impressed with the holiness of the man for he was nude, dirty and was lying on the floor with his feet resting on a *linga*.

Namdev wondered how this could be a saint. The saint, on the other hand, smiled on Namdev and asked, "Did Vithoba send you here?" This was a great surprise to Namdev who was now more inclined to believe the man to be great.

So Namdev asked him: "You are said to be a saint, why do you desecrate the *linga*?" The saint replied. "Indeed I am too old and weak to do the right thing. Please lift my feet and place them where there is no *linga*." Namdev accordingly lifted the saint's feet and placed them elsewhere. But there was again a *linga* below them. Wherever the feet were placed then and there appeared a *linga* underneath. Namdev finally placed the feet on himself and he turned into a *linga*. Then Namdev understood that God was immanent and learnt the truth and departed. He went home and did not go to the temple for several days. Vithoba now sought him out in his home and asked why Namdev would not go to the temple to see God. Namdev said: "Is there a place where He is not?"

The moral of the story is clear. Visions of God have their place below the plane of Self-Realisation.

Talk 390.

D.: When I read Sri Bhagavan's works I find that investigation is said to be the one method for Realisation.

M.: Yes, that is *vichara*.

D.: How is that to be done?

M.: The questioner must admit the existence of his self. "I AM" is the Realisation. To pursue the clue till Realisation is *vichara*. *Vichara* and Realisation are the same.

D.: It is elusive. What shall I meditate upon?

M.: Meditation requires an object to meditate upon, whereas there is only the subject without the object in *vichara*. Meditation differs from *vichara* in this way.

D.: Is not *dhyana* one of the efficient processes for Realisation?

M.: Dhyana is concentration on an object. It fulfils the purpose of keeping away diverse thoughts and fixing the mind on a single thought, which must also disappear before Realisation. But Realisation is nothing new to be acquired. It is already there, but obstructed by a screen of thoughts.

All our attempts are directed for lifting this screen and then Realisation is revealed.

If a true seeker is advised to meditate, many may go away satisfied with the advice. But someone among them may turn round and ask, "Who am I to meditate on an object?" Such a one must be told to find the Self. That is the finality. That is *Vichara*.

D.: Will *vichara* alone do in the absence of meditation?

M.: Vichara is the process and the goal also. 'I AM' is the goal and the final Reality. To hold to it with effort is *vichara*. When spontaneous and natural it is Realisation.

Talk 391.

The same *sannyasi* visitor, Swami Lokesananda, asked about *samadhi*.

M.: (1) Holding on to Reality is *samadhi*.

(2) Holding on to Reality with effort is *savikalpa samadhi*.

(3) Merging in Reality and remaining unaware of the world is *nirvikalpa samadhi*.[1]

(4) Merging in Ignorance and remaining unaware of the world is sleep. (Head bends but not in *samadhi*).

(5) Remaining in the primal, pure natural state without effort is *sahaja nirvikalpa samadhi*.

D.: It is said that one remaining in *nirvikalpa samadhi* for 21 days must necessarily give up the physical body.

M.: Samadhi means passing beyond *dehatma buddhi* (I-am-the-body idea) and non-identification of the body with the Self is a foregone conclusion.

There are said to be persons who have been immersed in *nirvikalpa samadhi* for a thousand years or more.

1. See table on next page

They can be further subdivided thus:

SAVIKALPA SAMADHI		NIRVIKALPA SAMADHI	
(*Bahya*) External	(*Antar*) Internal	(*Bahya*) External	(*Antar*) Internal
(*Drisyanuvidha*) The mind jumps from one object to another. Keep it steady, fixed on the Reality behind them	The mind is afflicted by *Kama, Krodha,* etc. See wherefrom they arise and how they have their being. Hold on to their source.	Merging in the one Reality which underlies all of the phenomena, and remaining unaware of the transitory manifestations.	Merging in the Inmost Being which is the One Reality giving rise to all thoughts, etc., and remaining unaware of anything else.
(*Sabdanuvidha*) There are the external phenomena which are said to have their origin from the Single Reality. Search for It and hold on to it.	There are all manner of thoughts which rise up from the Reality within and manifest themselves. Hold on to that Reality.	This state is compared to the waveless ocean whose waters are still and placid.	This state is compared to a flame unagitated by currents of air, but burning quite steady
All these four kinds of *savikalpa samadhi* are attended with effort		When these kinds of *nirvikalpa samadhi* are not attended with effort and it is realised that the waveless ocean of external *samadhi* and the steady flame of internal *samadhi* are identical, the state is said to be *sahaja nirvikalpa samadhi.*	

Talk 392.

(Swami Lokesananda continued another series of questions).

D.: They say that *Kundalini* must be roused before Realisation and that its awakening makes the body feel hot. Is that so?

M.: The yogis call it *Kundalini Sakti*. It is the same as *vritti*[1] of the form of God (*Bhagavatakara vritti*) of the *bhaktas* and *vritti* of the form of Brahman (*Brahmakara vritti*) of the *jnanis*. It must be preliminary to Realisation. The sensation produced may be said to be hot.

D.: Kundalini is said to be of the shape of a serpent but *vrittis* cannot be so.

M.: The *Kundalini* of *jnana marga* is said to be the Heart, which is also described in various ways as a network of *nadis*, of the shape of a serpent, of a lotus bud, etc.

D.: Is this Heart the same as the physiological heart?

M.: No, *Sri Ramana Gita* defines it as the origin of the 'I-thought'.

D.: But I read that it is on the right of the chest.

M.: It is all meant to help the *bhavana* (imagery). There are books dealing with six centres (*shadchakra*) and many other *lakshyas* (centres), internal and external. The description of the Heart is one among so many *lakshyas*. But it is not necessary. It is only the source of the 'I-thought'. That is the ultimate truth.

D.: May we take it to be the source of the *antahkaranas*?

M.: The inner organs (*antakaranas*) are classified as five: (1) Knowledge - *Jnana*; (2) Mind - *Manas*; (3) Intellect - *Buddhi*; (4) Memory - *Chitta*; and (5) The ego - *Ahankara*; some say only the latter four; others say only two, namely (1) *Manas*, mind and (2) *Ahankara*, the ego; still others say the *Antahkarana* is only one whose different functions make it appear differently and hence its different names. Heart is thus the source of the *Antahkaranas*.

There is the body which is insentient; there is the Self which is eternal and self-luminous; in between the two there has arisen a phenomenon, namely the ego, which goes under these different names, mind (*manas*), intellect (*buddhi*), memory (*chitta*), the ego (*ahankara*), power (*sakti*),

1. *vritti* = mode of mind

life current (*prana*), etc. Seek your source; the search takes you to the Heart automatically. The *antahkaranas* are only ideas (*kalpana*) to explain the subtle body (*sukshma sarira*). The physical body (*sarira*) is made up of the elements: earth, air, fire, water and ether; it is insentient. The Self is pure and self-luminous and thus self-evident. The relation between the two is sought to be established by positing a subtle body, composed of the subtle aspects of the five elements on the one hand, and the reflected light of the Self on the other. In this way the subtle body which is synonymous with the mind, is both sentient and insentient, *i.e*., *abhasa*. Again, by the play of the pure quality (*satva guna*) on the elements, their brightness (*satva* aspect) manifests as the mind (*manas*), and the senses (*jnanendriyas*); by the play of *rajas* (active quality), the *raja* (active) aspect manifests as life (*prana*) and limbs (*karmendriyas*); by the play of dullness (*tamas*) the *tama* (dark) aspect manifests as the gross phenomena of the body, etc.

D.: But the mind is reputed to have these three qualities also.

M.: Yes. There is purity (*satva*) in *satva* (in the pure quality); activity in it (*rajas* in *satva*); and dullness also (*tamas* in *satva*); and so on, *Suddha satva* is quite pure; *misra* (mixed *satva*) is a combination of *satva* with other qualities. The quality *satva* implies only its predominance over the other two qualities.

Later Sri Bhagavan continued: The intricate maze of philosophy of different schools is said to clarify matters and reveal the Truth. But in fact they create confusion where no confusion need exist. To understand anything there must be the Self. The Self is obvious. Why not remain as the Self? What need to explain the non-self?

Take the *Vedanta* for instance: They say there are fifteen kinds of *prana*. The student is made to commit the names to memory and also their functions. The air goes up and is called *prana*; goes down and is called *apana*; operates the *indriyas* and is called something. Why all this? Why do you classify, give names and enumerate the functions, and so on? Is it not enough to know that one *prana* does the whole work?

The *antahkarana* thinks, desires, wills, reasons, etc., and each function is attributed to one name such as mind, intellect, etc. Has anyone seen the *pranas* or the *antahkaranas*? Have they any real

existence? They are mere conceptions. When and where will such conceptions end?

Consider the following: A man sleeps. He says on waking that he slept. The question is asked: 'Why does he not say in his sleep that he is sleeping?' The answer is given that he is sunk in the Self and cannot speak, like a man who has dived in water to bring out something from the bottom. The diver cannot speak under water; when he has actually recovered the articles he comes out and speaks. Well, what is the explanation?

Being in water, water will flow into his mouth if he were to open the mouth for speaking. Is it not simple? But the philosopher is not content with this simple fact. He explains, saying that fire is the deity presiding over speech; that it is inimical to water and therefore cannot function! This is called philosophy and the learners are struggling to learn all this! Is it not a sheer waste of time? Again the Gods are said to preside over the limbs and senses of the individual (*vyashti*). They are the limbs and senses of *Virat* (*samashti*). So they go on explaining *Hiranyagarbha*, etc. Why should confusion be created and then explained away? Ah! Fortunate is the man who does not involve himself in this maze!

I was indeed fortunate that I never took to it. Had I taken to it, I would probably be nowhere - always in confusion. My *purva vasanas* (former tendencies) directly took me to the enquiry "Who am I?" It was indeed fortunate!

11th April, 1937

Talk 393.

D.: There is a short account of the spiritual experiences of St. Theresa, in the March number of the *Prabuddha Bharata*. She was devoted to a figure of the Madonna which became animated to her sight, and she was in bliss. Is it the same as *Saktipata*?

M.: The animated figure indicates depth of meditation (*dhyana bala*). *Saktipata* prepares the mind for introversion. There is a process of concentration of mind on one's own shadow which in due course becomes animated and answers questions put to it. That is due to strength of mind or depth of meditation. Whatever is external is

also transitory. Such phenomena may produce joy for the time being. But abiding peace, *i.e.*, *santi*, does not result. This is got only by the removal of *avidya* (ignorance).

Talk 394.

D.: How is the mind to be stilled?

M.: Looking at the mind with the mind, or fixing the mind in the Self, brings the mind under control of the Self.

D.: Is there any yoga, *i.e.*, a process for it?

M.: Vichara (investigation) alone will do.

Talk 395.

D.: How is *Poorna* Brahman to be attained? What is the method best suited to a *grihasta*?

M.: You have already said *poorna*, *i.e.*, perfection. Are you apart from *Poorna*? If apart from it, will it be *poorna*? If not apart how does the question arise? The knowledge that Brahman is *poorna* and that you are not apart from the same is the finality. See it and you will find that you are not a *grihasta* or any limited being.

D.: What are the *tatvas*?

M.: Knowledge of *poorna* Brahman will elucidate the other matters automatically.

12th April, 1937

Talk 396.

A Dutch lady, Mrs. Gongrijp, an ardent theosophist, who had worked long in Java and is now living in Adyar, came here for a short visit.

She asked: Theosophy speaks of *tanha*, meaning thirst for rebirth. What is its cause?

M.: Thirst for rebirth is the desire to be reborn so as to end successive births. The spirit is at present moribund; it must be revived so that rebirth may take place after the present apparent death. Forgetfulness of your real nature is the present death; remembrance of it is the rebirth. It puts an end to successive births. Yours is eternal life.

D.: I take *tanha* to mean 'clinging to life' - the desire for eternal life.

M.: No doubt it is so. How does the desire arise? Because the present state is unbearable. Why? Because it is not your true nature. Had it been your real nature no desire would disturb you. How does the present state differ from your real nature? You are spirit in truth. However that spirit is wrongly identifying itself with the gross body. The body has been projected by the mind; the mind itself has originated from the spirit. If the wrong identification ceases, there will be peace and permanent untellable bliss.

D.: Life is of the body and rebirth is to incarnate in another body.

M.: Mere change of body produces no effect. The ego associated with this body is transferred to another body. How can that satisfy anyone?

Moreover, what is life? Life is existence which is your Self. That is life Eternal. Otherwise can you imagine a time when you are not?

That life is now conditioned by the body and you wrongly identify your being with that of the body. You are life unconditioned. These bodies attach themselves to you as mental projections and you are now afflicted by 'I-am-the-body' idea. If this idea ceases you are your Self.

Where or how were you before being born? Were you in sleep? How were you? You exist then too without the body. Then the ego arises, and then the mind which projects the body. 'I-am-the-body' idea is the result. Because the body exists you say that it was born and that it will die, and transfer the idea to the Self saying that you are born and that you will die. In fact you remain without the body in sleep; but now you remain with the body. The Self can remain without the body, but the body cannot exist apart from the Self.

'I-am-the-body' thought is ignorance; that the body is not apart from the Self is knowledge. That is the difference between knowledge and ignorance.

The body is a mental projection, the mind is the ego; and the ego rises from the Self. So the body-thought is distracting and strays away from the Self. For whom is the body or the birth? It is not for the Self, the Spirit. It is for the non-self which imagines itself

separate. So long as there is the sense of separation there will be afflicting thoughts. If the original source is regained and the sense of separation is put an end to, there is peace.

Consider what happens when a stone is thrown up. It leaves its source and is projected up, tries to come down and is always in motion until it regains its source, where it is at rest. So also the waters of the ocean evaporate, form clouds which are moved by winds, condense into water, fall as rain and the waters roll down the hill in streams and rivers, until they reach their original source, the ocean, reaching which they are at peace. Thus, you see, wherever there is a sense of separateness from the source there is agitation and movement until the sense of separateness is lost. So it is with yourself. Now that you identify yourself with the body you think that you are separate from the Spirit - the true Self. You must regain your source before the false identity ceases and you are happy.

Gold is not an ornament, but the ornament is nothing but gold. Whatever shape the ornament may assume and however different the ornaments are, there is only one reality, namely gold. So also with the bodies and the Self. The single reality is the Self. To identify oneself with the body and yet to seek happiness is like attempting to cross a river on the back of an alligator. The body identity is due to extroversion and the wandering of the mind. To continue in that state will only keep one in an endless tangle and there will be no peace. Seek your source, merge in the Self and remain all alone.

Rebirth means discontent with the present state, and desire to be born where there will be no discontent. Births, being of the body, cannot affect the Self. The Self remains over even after the body perishes. The discontent is due to the wrong identity of the Eternal Self with the perishable body. The body is a necessary adjunct of the ego. If the ego is killed the eternal Self is revealed in all its glory.

The body is the Cross. Jesus, the son of man, is the ego or 'I am-the-body' idea. When he is crucified, he is resurrected as the Glorious Self - Jesus, the Son of God! — "Give up this life if thou wouldst live"

Talk 397.

D.: Fear is consequent on the possibility of non-existence. It pertains to the body. One is not aware of the body in sleep. One is not afraid of, but courts sleep, whereas one dreads death. Why is this difference between the two outlooks?

M.: Desire of sleep or fear of death are when the mind is active and not in the respective states themselves. The mind knows that the body entity persists and reappears after sleep. Therefore sleep is not attended with fear but the pleasure of non-bodily existence is sought. Whereas the mind is not sure of reappearance after the so-called death and dreads it.

14th April, 1937

Talk 398.

Dandapani, a resident devotee now on a North Indian tour, sent an extract from the Modern Psychological Review which stated that the dynamic centre of the Heart is on the right and not on the left whereas the physical organ is on the left.

Conversation followed on that subject.

M.: The yoga *marga* speaks of the six centres each of which must be reached by practice and transcended until one reaches *sahasrara* where nectar is found and thus immortality. The yogis say that one enters into the *paranadi* which starts from the sacral plexus whereas the *jnanis* say that the same *nadi* starts from the heart. Reconciliation between the seeming]y contradictory statements is effected in the secret doctrine which distinctly states the *yogic paranadi* is from *muladhara* and the *jnana paranadi* is from the Heart. The truth is that the *paranadi* should be entered. By yogic practice one goes down, then rises up, wanders all through until the goal is reached; by *jnana abhyas* one settles down directly in the centre.

D.: Is not *para* followed by *pasyanti*, etc.?

M.: You are speaking of *vak* which is divided into (1) *para*, (2) *pasyanti*, (3) *madhyama* and (4) *vaikhari*; *Vak* is *prana sakti* whereas the mind is *tejorupa* or *chit sakti*. The *sakti* is the manifestation of the unmanifest origin.

The Yogis attach the highest importance to going up to *sahasrara i.e.*, the brain centre or the thousand-petalled-lotus. Some yogis say that there are other centres higher up with greater involutions *e.g.*, 100,000 (100) petalled or 100,000,000 (108) petalled ones. Let us omit them for the present. They point out the scriptural statement that the life-current enters the body through the fontanelle and argue that, *viyoga* (separation) having come about that way, yoga (union) must also be effected in the reverse way. Therefore we must by yoga practice, gather up the *pranas* and enter the fontanelle for the consummation of yoga. The *jnanis* point out that the yogi assumes the existence of the body, its separateness from the Self, and therefore advises effort for reunion by the practice of yoga.

In fact, the body is in the mind which has the brain for its seat, which again functions by light borrowed from another source as admitted by the yogis themselves in their fontanelle theory. The *jnani* further argues: if the light is borrowed it must come from its native source. Go to the source direct and do not depend on borrowed resources. Just as an iron ball comes into being separate from the mass of iron, gets fiery, in fire, later cools down giving up the fire, but must again be made fiery to reunite with the original mass, so also the cause of separation must also form the factor of reunion.

Again if there is an image reflected there must be a source and also accessories like the Sun and a pot of water for reflection. To do away with the reflection either the surface is covered up corresponding to reaching the fontanelle according to the yogis or the water is drained away which is called *tapas* (*Tapo Brahmeti - tapas* is Brahman). That is to say, the thoughts or the brain activities are made to cease. This is *jnana-marga.*

All these are however on the assumption that the *jiva* is separate from the Self or Brahman. But are we separate? "No", says the *jnani*. The ego is simply wrong identity of the Self with the non-self, as in the case of a colourless crystal and its coloured background. The crystal though colourless appears red because of its background. If the background is removed the crystal shines in its original purity. So it is with the Self and the *antahkaranas*.

Still again the illustration is not quite appropriate. For the ego has its source from the Self and is not separate like the background from the crystal. Having its source from the Self, the ego must only be retraced in order that it might merge in its source.

The centre of the ego and its core is called the Heart, the same as the Self.

A gentleman asked if the yogis also reach the *anahata* and thus realise the Heart-centre as is done by the *jnanis* but in a different way.

M.: Anahata is not the same as the Heart-centre. If so, why should they wander further on to *Sahasrara*? Moreover, the question arises because of the sense of separateness persisting in us. We are never away from the Heart-centre. Before reaching *anahata* or after passing it, one is only in the centre. Whether one understands it or not, one is not away from the centre. Practice of yoga or *vichara* is done, always remaining in the centre only.

D.: What is to be our *sadhana*?

M.: Sadhana for the *sadhaka* is the *sahaja* of the *siddha*. *Sahaja* is the original state, so that *sadhana* amounts to the removal of the obstacles to the realisation of this abiding truth.

D.: Is concentration of mind one of the *sadhanas*?

M.: Concentration is not thinking one thing. It is, on the other hand, putting off all other thoughts which obstruct the vision of our true nature. All our efforts are only directed to lifting the veil of ignorance. Now it appears difficult to quell the thoughts. In the regenerate state it will be found more difficult to call in thoughts. For are there things to think of? There is only the Self. Thoughts can function only if there are objects. But there are no objects. How can thoughts arise at all?

The habit makes us believe that it is difficult to cease thinking. If the error is found out, one would not be fool enough to exert oneself unnecessarily by way of thinking.

D.: Is not grace more effective than *abhyasa*?

M.: Guru simply helps you in the eradication of ignorance. Does he hand over Realisation to you?

D.: We are ignorant.

M.: Inasmuch as you say you are ignorant, you are wise. Is he a madman who says that he is mad? Guru's Grace is like a hand extended to help you out of water, or it makes your way easier for the removal of ignorance.

D.: Is it not like a medicine to cure the disease of *avidya*?

M.: What is medicine for? It is only to restore the patient to the original state of health. What is this talk of Guru. Grace, God, etc.? Does the Guru hold you by the hand and whisper something in your ear? You imagine him to be like yourself. Because you are with a body you think that he is also a body in order to do something tangible to you. His work lies within. How is Guru gained? God, who is immanent, in his Grace takes pity on the loving devotee and manifests Himself as a being according to the devotee's standard. The devotee thinks that he is a man and expects relationship as between bodies. But the Guru, who is God or Self incarnate, works from within, helps the man to see the error of his ways, guides him in the right path until he realises the Self within.

After such realisation the disciple feels, "I was so worried before. I am after all the Self, the same as before but not affected by anything; where is he who was miserable? He is nowhere to be seen."

What should we do now? Only act up to the words of the master, work within. The Guru is both within and without. So he creates conditions to drive you inward and prepares the interior to drag you to the centre. Thus he gives a push from without and exerts a pull from within so that you may be fixed at the centre.

In sleep you are centred within. Simultaneously with waking your mind rushes out, thinking this, that and all else. This must be checked. It is possible only for the agent who can work both within and without. Can he be identified with a body? We think that the world can be conquered by our efforts. When frustrated externally and driven internally, we feel "Oh! oh! There is a power higher than man." The existence of the higher power must be admitted and recognised. The ego is a very powerful elephant and cannot be brought under control by anyone less than a lion, who is no other than the Guru in this instance; whose very look makes the elephant tremble and die. We will know in due course that our glory lies where we cease to exist.

In order to gain that state, one should surrender oneself saying "LORD! Thou art my Refuge!" The master then sees "This man is in a fit state to receive guidance," and so guides him.

D.: What is Self-surrender?

M.: It is the same as self-control; control is effected by removal of *samskaras* which imply the functioning of the ego. The ego submits only when it recognises the Higher Power. Such recognition is surrender or submission, or self-control. Otherwise the ego remains stuck up like the image carved on a tower, making a pretence by its strained look and posture that it is supporting the tower on its shoulders. The ego cannot exist without the Power but thinks that it acts of its own accord.

D.: How can the rebellious mind be brought under control?

M.: Either seek its source so that it may disappear or surrender that it may be struck down.

D.: But the mind slips away from our control.

M.: Be it so. Do not think of it. When you recollect yourself bring it back and turn it inward. That is enough.

No one succeeds without effort. Mind control is not one's birthright. The successful few owe their success to their perseverance.

A passenger in a train keeps his load on the head by his own folly. Let him put it down: he will find the load reaches the destination all the same. Similarly, let us not pose as the doers, but resign ourselves to the guiding Power.

D.: Swami Vivekananda says that a spiritual Guru can transfer spirituality substantially to the disciple.

M.: Is there a substance to be transferred? Transfer means eradication of the sense of being the disciple. The master does it. Not that the man was something at one time and metamorphosed later into another.

D.: Is not Grace the gift of the Guru?

M.: God, Grace and Guru are all synonymous and also eternal and immanent. Is not the Self already within? Is it for the Guru to bestow It by his look? If a Guru thinks so, he does not deserve the name.

The books say that there are so many kinds of *diksha* (initiations - *hasta diksha, sparsa diksha, chakshu diksha, mano diksha,* etc.) They also say that the Guru makes some rites with fire, water, *japa, mantras,* etc., and call such fantastic performances *dikshas*, as if the disciple (*sishya*) becomes ripe only after such processes are gone through by the Guru.

If the individual is sought he is nowhere to be found. Such is the Guru. Such is Dakshinamurti. What did he do? He was silent; the disciples appeared before him. He maintained silence, the doubts of the disciples were dispelled, which means that they lost their individual identities. That is *jnana* and not all the verbiage usually associated with it.

Silence is the most potent form of work. However vast and emphatic the sastras may be, they fail in their effect. The Guru is quiet and peace prevails in all. His silence is more vast and more emphatic than all the sastras put together. These questions arise because of the feeling, that having been here so long, heard so much, exerted so hard, one has not gained anything. The work proceeding within is not apparent. In fact the Guru is always within you.

Thayumanavar says: "Oh Lord! Coming with me all along the births, never abandoning me and finally rescuing me!" Such is the experience of Realisation.

Srimad Bhagavad Gita says the same in a different way, "We two are not only now but have ever been so."

D.: Does not the Guru take a concrete form?

M.: What is meant by *concrete*? Because you identify your being with your body, you raise this question. Find out if you are the body.

The Gita says: *param bhavam ajanantah* (Bh. Gita IX - II) - that those who cannot understand the transcendental nature (of Sri Krishna) are fools, deluded by ignorance.

The master appears to dispel that ignorance. As Thayumanavar puts it, he appears as a man to dispel the ignorance of a man, just as a deer is used as a decoy to capture the wild deer. He has to appear with a body in order to eradicate our ignorant "I-am-the-body" idea.

15th April, 1937

Talk 399.

Mr. Bose, the Bengali Engineer, has since read *Gaudapada Karikas* and Sir S. Radhakrishnan's *Indian Philosophy* and so asked questions as follows:

D.: Is there any genuine difference between dream experience and waking state?

M.: Because you find the dream creations transitory in relation to the waking state there is said to be a difference. The difference is only apparent and not real.

D.: Is the waking state independent of existing objects?

M.: Were it so, the objects must exist without the seer; that is to say, the object must tell you that it exists. Does it do so? For example, does a cow moving in front of you say that she is moving? Or do you say of your own accord "There is a cow moving"? The objects exist because of the seer cognising them.

D.: Gaudapada in *Mandukya Karikas* says that there is no difference between the two states from the standpoint of Reality-Absolute.

M.: Of course not.

D.: I believe Bhagavan also says so. Prof. Radhakrishnan in his *Indian Philosophy* says that in his Brahma Sutra Commentary Sri Sankara makes a distinction between the two states. Is it a fact? If so, what is it? How can there be any distinction from the viewpoint of reality? So long as the mind exists in any form there will be distinction. But from the standpoint of *Atman*, non-dual Brahman, can there be any distinction?

M.: The dream is for the one who says that he is awake. In fact, wakefulness and dream are equally unreal from the standpoint of the Absolute.

D.: In pure *Advaita* can evolution, creation or manifestation have any place? What about the theory of *vivarta* according to which Brahman appears as the world without forgetting its essential nature, like the rope appearing as snake?

M.: There are different methods of approach to prove the unreality of the universe. The example of the dream is one among them. *Jagrat, svapna* and *sushupti* are all treated elaborately in the scripture in order that the Reality underlying them might be revealed. It is not meant to accentuate differences among the three states. The purpose must be kept clearly in view.

Now they say that the world is unreal. Of what degree of unreality is it? Is it like that of a son of a barren mother or a flower in the sky, mere words without any reference to facts? Whereas the world is a fact and not a mere word. The answer is that it is a superimposition on the one Reality, like the appearance of a snake on a coiled rope seen in dim light.

But here too the wrong identity ceases as soon as the friend points out that it is a rope. Whereas in the matter of the world it persists even after it is known to be unreal. How is that? Again the appearance of water in a mirage persists even after the knowledge of the mirage is recognised. So it is with the world. Though knowing it to be unreal, it continues to manifest.

But the water of the mirage is not sought to satisfy one's thirst. As soon as one knows that it is a mirage, one gives it up as useless and does not run after it for procuring water.

D.: Not so with the appearance of the world. Even after it is repeatedly declared to be false one cannot avoid satisfying one's wants from the world. How can the world be false?

M.: It is like a man satisfying his dream wants by dream creations. There are objects, there are wants and there is satisfaction. The dream creation is as purposeful as the *jagrat* world and yet it is not considered real.

Thus we see that each of these illustrations serves a distinct purpose in establishing the stages of unreality. The realised sage finally declares that in the regenerate state the *jagrat* world also is found to be as unreal as the dream world is found to be in the *jagrat* state.

Each illustration should be understood in its proper context; it should not be studied as an isolated statement. It is a link in a chain. The purpose of all these is to direct the seeker's mind towards the one Reality underlying them all.

D.: Is there that difference in the philosophy of Sankara and Gaudapada which the learned Professor wants us to believe?

M.: The difference is only in our imagination.

D.: Sir S. Radhakrishnan writes:

"The general idea pervading Gaudapada's work that bondage and liberation, the individual soul and the world are all unreal, makes a caustic critic observe that the theory which has nothing better to say than that an unreal soul is trying to escape from an unreal Supreme Good, may itself be an unreality. It is one thing to say that the unchangeable reality expressing itself in the changing universe without forfeiting its nature is a mystery, and another to dismiss the whole changing universe as a mere mirage. If we have to play the game of life we cannot do so with the conviction that the play is a show and all the prizes in it are mere blanks. No philosophy can consistently hold such a theory and be at rest with itself. The greatest condemnation of such a theory is that we are obliged to occupy ourselves with objects the existence and value of which we are continually denying in theory. It only shows that there is something else which includes and transcends the world but it does not imply the world is a dream."

M.: As was already said, the purpose of the whole philosophy is to indicate the underlying Reality whether of the *jagrat, svapna* and *sushupti* states, or the individual souls, the world and God.

There are three outlooks possible:-

(1) The *Vyavaharika:* The man sees the world in all its variety, surmises the creator and believes in himself as the subject. All these are thus reduced to the three fundamentals, *jagat*, *jiva* and *Isvara*. He learns the existence of the creator and tries to reach him in order to gain immortality. If one is thus released from bondage, there are all other individuals existing as before who should work out their own salvation. He more or less admits the One Reality underlying all these phenomena. The phenomena are due to the play of *maya*. *Maya* is the *sakti of Isvara* or the activity of Reality. Thus, existence of different souls, objects, etc., do not clash with the *advaitic* point of view.

(2) The *Pratibhasika*: The *jagat, jiva* and *Isvara* are all cognised by the seer only. They do not have any existence independent of

him. So there is only one *jiva*, be it the individual or God. All else is simply a myth.

(3) The *Paramarthika*: *i.e.*, *ajatavada* (no-creation doctrine) which admits of no second. There is no reality or absence of it, no seeking or gaining, no bondage or liberation and so on.

The question arises why then do all the *sastras* speak of the Lord as the creator? How can the creature that you are create the creator and argue that the *jagat, jiva* and *Isvara* are mental conceptions only?

The answer is as follows:-

You know that your father of this *jagrat* state is dead and that several years have elapsed since his death. However you see him in your dream and recognise him to be your father, of whom you were born and who has left patrimony to you. Here the creator is in the creature. Again, you dream that you are serving a king and that you are a part in the administrative wheel of the kingdom. As soon as you wake up all of them have disappeared leaving you, the single individual, behind. Where were they all? Only in yourself. The same analogy holds good in the other case also.

D.: In the *Vyavaharika*, above mentioned, how does *maya* come in?

M.: Maya is only *Isvara-Sakti* or the activity of Reality.

D.: Why does it become active?

M.: How can this question arise? You are yourself within its fold. Are you standing apart from that universal activity in order to ask this question? The same Power is raising this doubt in order that all doubts may finally cease.

D.: The dream world is not purposeful as the *jagrat* world, because we do not feel that wants are satisfied.

M.: You are not right. There are thirst and hunger in dream also. You might have had your fill and kept over the remaining food for the next day. Nevertheless you feel hungry in dream. This food does not help you. Your dream-hunger can be satisfied only by eating dream-food. Dream-wants are satisfied by dream-creations only.

D.: We recollect our dreams in our *jagrat* but not *vice-versa*.

M.: Not right again. In the dream you identify yourself with the one now speaking.

D.: But we do not know that we are dreaming as apart from waking as we do now.

M.: The dream is the combination of *jagrat* and *sushupti*. It is due to the *samskaras* of the *jagrat* state. Hence we remember dreams at present. *Samskaras* are not formed contrariwise; therefore also we are not aware of the dream and *jagrat* simultaneously. Still everyone will recollect strange perplexities in dream. One wonders if he dreams or is awake. He argues and determines that he is only awake. When really awake, he finds that it was all only a dream.

Talk 400.

In the course of another conversation Sri Bhagavan said: Photisms add zest to meditation and nothing more.

16th April, 1937

Talk 401.

Mr. Krishnamurti, an Andhra gentleman, asked as follows:- When we make *tapas*, on what object must we fix our sight? Our mind is fixed on what we utter.

M.: What is *tapas* for?

D.: For Self-Realisation.

M.: Quite so. *Tapas* depends on the competency of the person. One requires a form to contemplate. But it is not enough. For can anyone keep looking at an image always? So the image must be implemented by *japa*. *Japa* helps fixing the mind on the image, in addition to the eyesight. The result of these efforts is concentration of mind, which ends in the goal. He becomes what he thinks. Some are satisfied with the name of the image. Every form must have a name. That name denotes all the qualities of God. Constant *japa* puts off all other thoughts and fixes the mind. That is *tapas*. One-pointedness is the *tapas* wanted.

The question what *tapas* is was asked in order to know what purpose to serve. It will take the form required for the purpose.

D.: Are not physical austerities also *tapas*?

M.: May be one form of it. They are due to *vairagya* (dispassion) .

D.: I have seen a man with his arm lifted all his life.

M.: That is *vairagya*.

D.: Why should one afflict his body for the purpose?

M.: You think it is affliction whereas it is a vow and for the other man it is an achievement and a pleasure.

Dhyana may be external or internal or both. *Japa* is more important than external form. It must be done until it becomes natural. It starts with effort and is continued until it proceeds of itself. When natural it is called Realisation.

Japa may be done even while engaged in other work. That which is, the One Reality. It may be represented by a form, a *japa, mantra, vichara* or any kind of attempt. All of them finally resolve themselves into that One Single Reality. *Bhakti, vichara, japa* are only different forms of our efforts to keep out the unreality. The unreality is an obsession at present. Reality is our true nature. We are wrongly persisting in unreality, that is, thoughts and worldly activities. Cessation of these will reveal the Truth. Our attempts are directed towards keeping them out. It is done by thinking of the Reality only. Although it is our true nature it looks as if we are thinking of the Reality. What we do really amounts to the removal of obstacles for the revelation of our true Being. Meditation or *vichara* is thus a reversion to our true nature.

D.: Are our attempts sure to succeed?

M.: Realisation is our nature. It is nothing new to be gained. What is new cannot be eternal. Therefore there is no need for doubting if one would lose or gain the Self.

Talk 402.

While speaking of the Brain and the Heart Sri Bhagavan recalled an incident of old days as follows:-

Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni once argued that the brain was the most important centre and Sri Bhagavan maintained that the Heart was even more so. There were others watching the discourse. A few days after Sri Bhagavan received a letter containing a short poem in English on that discourse from a young boy, N. S. Arunachalam, who had not yet matriculated.

That poem is remarkable for its poetic imagination. Sri Bhagavan, Kavyakantha, and the assemblage of other persons are represented as the Heart, the brain and the body respectively, and again as the sun, the moon and the earth also. The light from the sun is reflected on the moon and the earth is illumined. Similarly the brain acts by consciousness derived from the Heart and the body is thus protected. This teaching of Sri Bhagavan is found in *Ramana Gita* also. The Heart is the most important centre from which vitality and light radiate to the brain, thus enabling it to function. The *vasanas* are enclosed in the Heart in their subtlest form, later flowing to the brain which reflects them highly magnified corresponding to a cinema-show at every stage. That is how the world is said to be nothing more than a cinema-show.

Sri Bhagavan also added:- Were the *vasanas* in the brain instead of in the Heart they must be extinguished if the head is cut off so that reincarnations will be at an end. But it is not so. The Self obviously safeguards the *vasanas* in its closest proximity, *i.e*. within itself in the Heart, just as a miser keeps his most valued possessions (treasure) with himself and never out of contact. Hence the place where the *vasanas* are, is the Self, *i.e*., the Heart, and not the brain (which is only the theatre for the play of the *vasanas* from the greenhouse of the Heart.)

17th April, 1937

Talk 403.

There was some reference to the extract from the *Modern Psychological Review*, wondering if any instruments could be of use in detecting the Heart-centre and if proper subjects were available for recording the experience of the adepts in the spiritual path, and so on. Others were speaking. Sri Bhagavan said: In the incident mentioned in the book *Self-Realization* that I became unconscious and symptoms of death supervened, I was all along aware. I could feel the action of the physical heart stopped and equally the action of the Heart-centre unimpaired. This state lasted about a quarter of an hour.

We asked if it was true that some disciples have had the privilege of feeling Sri Bhagavan's Heart-centre to be on the right by placing their hands on Sri Bhagavan's chest. Sri Bhagavan said, "Yes." (Mr. Viswanatha

Iyer, Narayana Reddi and others have said they felt Sri Bhagavan's Heart-centre to be on the right by placing their hands on his chest).

A devotee rightly observed that if hands could feel and locate the Heart-centre, delicate scientific instruments should certainly do it.

D.: The Heart is said to be on the right, on the left or in the centre. With such differences of opinion how are we to meditate on *Hridaya*?

M.: You *are* and it is a fact. *Dhyana* is by you, of you, and in you. It must go on where you are. It cannot be outside you. So you are the centre of *dhyana* and that is the Heart.

A location is however given to it with reference to the body. You know that you *are*. Where are you? You are in the body and not out of it. Yet not the whole body. Though you pervade the whole body still you admit of a centre where from all your thoughts start and wherein they subside. Even when the limbs are amputated you are there but with defective senses. So a centre must be admitted. That is called the Heart. The Heart is not merely the centre but the Self. Heart is only another name for the Self.

Doubts arise only when you identify it with something tangible and physical. The scriptures no doubt describe it as the source of 101 *nadis*, etc. In *Yoga Vasishta* Chudala says that *kundalini* is composed of 101 *nadis*, thus identifying one with the other.

Heart is no conception, no object for meditation. But it is the seat of meditation; the Self remains all alone. You see the body in the Heart, the world in it. There is nothing separate from it. So all kinds of effort are located there only.

18th April, 1937

Talk 404.

A casual visitor asked: What is *nishta*? How is the look to be directed between the eyebrows?

M.: How do we see these things? There is a light by which these are seen. Your question amounts to asking how that light is seen.

D.: What is the significance of the spot between the eyebrows?

M.: That is mentioned as if to say: "Do not see with your eyes."

D.: What is regulation of breath for?

M.: Only to control the mind.

Again after a few minutes Sri Bhagavan continued: The mind functions both as light and as objects. If divested of things the light alone will remain over.

D.: But we must know that there is such light.

M.: Sight or cognition is impossible without such light. How do you cognise anything in sleep? Our cognition pertains to the present state because there is light. Light is the essential requisite for sight. It is plain in our daily life. Among the lights, sunlight is the most important. Hence they speak of the glory of millions of suns.

D.: There is light if we press the eyelids with our fingers.

Another questioner: What is the use of seeing such a light?

M.: It is done lest we forget the goal. The practice helps one not to divert the attention to other pursuits.

The object is seen or the light is recognised because there is the subject to do so. How does it affect the subject whether the objects are seen or not? If the light, *i.e.*, the cogniser or the consciousness is seen, there will be no object to be seen. Pure light, *i.e.*, Consciousness, will alone remain over.

D.: Why then is the regulation of breath necessary?

M.: Control of breath or its regulation is only for controlling the mind so that the mind may not wander away.

D.: Is it for control of mind only?

M.: It is not enough that light is seen; it is also necessary to have the mind engaged in a single activity, *e.g.*, the elephant trunk and the chain.

D.: How long will it take for one to gain *Chintamani* (the celestial gem granting all the wishes of its owner)?

M.: The example of *Chintamani* is found in *Yoga Vasishta*. *Chintamani* signifies the Real nature of the Self. The story is as follows:-

A man was making *tapasya* for gaining *Chintamani*. A gem mysteriously fell into his hands. He thought that it could not be

Chintamani because his efforts had been too short and too little to gain the gem. He discarded it and continued the *tapas*. Later a *sadhu* placed before him a brilliant pebble with facets cut. The man was taken in by its appearance but found that it could not fulfil his desires as he originally supposed. Similarly, the Self, being inherent, should not be sought for elsewhere.

Again, an elephant used to be often teased by its keeper. He once had an accident and fell down. The elephant could have killed him on the spot but did not do so. Later, however, the keeper dug a big pit in the forest and killed the elephant.

Chudala illustrated Sikhidhvaja's error by this story. He had *vairagya* even while ruling his kingdom and could have realised the Self if only he had pushed his *vairagya* to the point of killing the ego. He did not do it, but came to the forest, had a timetable of *tapas* and yet did not improve even after 18 years of *tapas*. He had made himself a victim of his own creation. Chudala advised him to give up the ego and realise the Self which he did and was liberated.

It is clear from Chudala's story that *vairagya* accompanied by ego is of no value, whereas all possessions in the absence of ego do not matter.

19th April, 1937

Talk 405.

A respectable and orthodox gentleman asked about Sri Chakra.

M.: It has a deep significance. There are 43 corners with sacred syllables in them. Its worship is a method for concentration of mind. The mind is wont to move externally. It must be checked and turned within. Its habit is to dwell on names and forms, for all external objects possess names and forms. Such names and forms are made symbolic mental conceptions in order to divert the mind from external objects and make it dwell within itself. The idols, *mantras*, *yantras*, are all meant to give food to the mind in its introvert state, so that It may later become capable of being concentrated, after which the superb state is reached automatically.

20th April, 1937

Talk 406.

Mr. Cohen, a resident disciple, has been for some days past thinking about a book called *Nirvana* written by a prominent Theosophist, wherein the author claims to reach *nirvana* every night after going to sleep. He claims to see his own Master and other Masters of the Theosophical Society as bright lights within the ocean of light which is *nirvana*. He asked Sri Bhagavan how it could be possible, considering the *Advaitic* teaching that the *nirvanic* experience is the same as that of the pure consciousness of Being.

M.: Nirvana is Perfection. In the Perfect State there is neither subject nor object; there is nothing to see, nothing to feel, nothing to know. Seeing and knowing are the functions of the mind. In *nirvana* there is nothing but the blissful pure consciousness "I am."

D.: How then can a prominent T. S. leader, who claims clairvoyance of a high order, praise the author for his supposed correct and vivid description of *nirvana*, and why is the T. Society so much obsessed by the idea of 'Service'?

M.: Well, Theosophy and other kindred movements are good inasmuch as they make a man unselfish and prepare him for the highest truth. Service, like prayers, *japas* and even business done in God's name, lead to the highest goal - Self-Realisation.

D.: But after how long? and why should a man who is ready for the Absolute knowledge stick to the knowledge of the Relative?

M.: Everything happens in its own time. The one who is ready for the absolute knowledge will be made somehow to hear of it and follow it up. He will realise that *Atmavidya* is the highest of all virtues and also the end of the journey.

Then, asked about the difference between external and internal *nirvikalpa samadhis*, referring to article 391 above, the Master said:

External *samadhi* is holding on to the Reality while witnessing the world, without reacting to it from within. There is the stillness of a waveless ocean. The internal *samadhi* involves loss of body-consciousness.

D.: Is loss of body-consciousness a perquisite to the attainment of *sahaja samadhi*?

M.: What is body-consciousness? Analyse it. There must be a body and consciousness limited to it which together make up body-consciousness. These must lie in another Consciousness which is absolute and unaffected. Hold it. That is *samadhi*.

It exists when there is no body-consciousness because it transcends the latter, it also exists when there is the body-consciousness. So it is always there.

What does it matter whether body-consciousness is lost or retained? When lost it is internal *samadhi:* when retained, it is external *samadhi*. That is all.

A person must remain in any of the six *samadhis* so that *sahaja samadhi* may be easy for him.

D.: The mind does not sink into that state even for a second.

M.: A strong conviction is necessary that I am the Self, transcending the mind and the phenomena.

D.: Nevertheless, the mind proves to be a cord against attempts to sink it.

M.: What does it matter if the mind is active? It is so only on the substratum of the Self. Hold the Self even during mental activities.

D.: I cannot go within sufficiently deep.

M.: It is wrong to say so. Where are you now if not in the Self? Where should you go?

All that is necessary is the stern belief that you are the Self. Say rather that the other activities throw a veil on you.

D.: Yes, it is so.

M.: That means that the conviction is weak.

D.: I understand that the 'I' is only artificial (*krtrima*), my attempts at realising the real 'I' are unavailing because the artificial 'I' is brought into action for realising the other.

M.: Viveka Chudamani makes it clear that the artificial 'I' of the *vijnana kosa* is a projection and through it one must look to the significance (*vachya*) of 'I', the true principle.

Talk 407.

D.: St. Theresa and others saw the image of Madonna animated. It was external. Others see the images of their devotion in their mental sight. This is internal. Is there any difference in degree in these two cases?

M.: Both indicate that the person has strongly developed meditation. Both are good and progressive. There is no difference in degree.

The one has a conception of divinity and draws mental images and feels them. The other has the conception of divinity in the image and feels it in the image. The feeling is within in both instances.

21st April, 1937

Talk 408.

With reference to the location of the Heart centre on the right side of the human body, Sri Bhagavan said:-

I had been saying all along that the Heart centre was on the right, notwithstanding the refutation by some learned men that physiology taught them otherwise. I speak from experience. I knew it even in my home during my trances. Again during the incident related in the book *Self-Realisation* I had a very clear vision and experience. All of a sudden a light came from one side erasing the world vision in its course until it spread all round when the vision of the world was completely cut out. I felt the muscular organ on the left had stopped work, I could understand that the body was like a corpse, that the circulation of blood had stopped and the body became blue and motionless. Vasudeva Sastri embraced the body, wept over my death, but I could not speak. All the time I was feeling that the Heart centre on the right was working as well as ever. This state continued 15 or 20 minutes. Then suddenly something shot out from the right to the left resembling a rocket bursting in air. The blood circulation was resumed and normal condition restored. I then asked Vasudeva Sastri to move along with me and we reached our residence.

The Upanishads say that 101 *nadis* terminate in the Heart and 72,000 originate from them and traverse the body. The Heart is thus the centre of the body. It can be a centre because we have been accustomed to think that we remain in the body. In fact the body and all else are in that centre only.

Talk 409.

A middle-aged man prostrated himself before Sri Bhagavan, who asked him about his well-being. After a few minutes Sri Bhagavan recalled an incident saying that this was the only person whom Sri Bhagavan had slapped; it happened about 30 years earlier.

Sri Bhagavan was living in Mulaippal Tirtha. There was a Jada Swami living in the neighbourhood (*Mamarathu Guhai*). This man, who was then about 8 years of age, used to play pranks with all, including Sri Bhagavan.

One day he went to Maharshi and said that Jada Swami wanted a bucket. Without waiting for permission, he took away the bucket. Palani Swami the attendant, was not there. So Sri Bhagavan followed the boy to Jada Swami's place. Before Bhagavan reached the place the boy had told the other that Brahmanaswami had sent him a bucket. Jada Swami was wondering why! In a few minutes Maharshi reached the place and learnt what had passed. So he raised His hand to give a slap to the boy but the mind would not yield to slapping. But He argued within Himself and determined that the urchin should be slapped and so he did it.

Talk 410.

There is a Tamil stanza by Awai. It is an address of the *prana* to the stomach; its meaning is:

"O stomach! How difficult it is to get on with you! You cannot starve when no food is available, nor can you take more and keep it in reserve when food is plenty! You will take only what you want and when you want; thus you are troublesome to me, allowing me no rest."

Sri Bhagavan altered it thus: Stomach addressing the *prana*: "*O Prana*! How troublesome you are to me! You never allow me to rest but continue loading me with food off and on. It is so difficult to get on with you."

Saying it Sri Bhagavan laughed. Sri Bhagavan often says that He is made to eat more than is good for Him.

21st May, 1937

Talk 411.

Sri Bhagavan, while speaking of the marriage ceremony among the Brahmins, said that the *Kasiyatra* represents the bridegroom to be a *vairagi-purusha*. It is therefore right that he should be given a *kanya* (virgin) for leading a householder's life. It follows that a *vairagi* can alone be a good householder.

Talk 412.

Once on a cold day Sri Bhagavan was sitting in a cave on the hill with His hands folded on the breast as a protection against the cold. Some Andhra visitor had come; he broke a coconut and poured the cold juice on Sri Bhagavan's head as *abhisheka*; Sri Bhagavan was surprised.

Talk 413.

A visitor asked: While making *nama-japa* and after continuing it for an hour or more I fall into a state like sleep. On waking up, I recollect that my *japa* has been interrupted. So I proceed again.

M.: "Like sleep." That is right. It is the natural state. Because you are now associated with the ego you consider the natural state to be something which interrupts your work. You must repeat the experience until you realise that it is your natural state. You will then find that *japa*, etc., is extraneous. Still, it will be going on automatically. Your present doubt is due to the false identity.

Japa means clinging to one thought to the exclusion of all other thoughts. That is the purpose of *japa*; it leads to *dhyana* which ends in Self-Realisation.

Talk 414.

Mr. G. V. Subbaramiah, a devotee, has written some short poems, which are interesting. Some of them refer to a child. Sri Bhagavan said God becomes a child, and *vice versa*. That means that the *samskaras* are yet latent in the child and thus its innocence is complete. When they are eradicated even a grown up man becomes a child once again, and thus remains God.

The author said: The child creates the 'home' atmosphere.

Sri Bhagavan: Yes. The children are always in the 'home'. We too are there but are dreaming and imagining that we are outside the home.

Sri Bhagavan added: I have rendered the word 'youth' (*yuva*) in *Dakshinamurti Stotra* by 'child' (*bala*). This seems more appropriate.

To be reborn is to become children over again. One must be reborn before gaining *jnana*, *i.e.*, recovering the natural state.

Talk 415.

Sri Bhagavan read out some stanzas on the greatness of the Tamil language from the preface to a Tamil-Tamil Dictionary and explained the references in a very interesting manner. Of the three tests for establishing the superiority of Saivism over Jainism, the first related to Tirujnanasambandar entering the royal presence for curing the Pandya king of his illness. The queen was anxious because of his tender age, *i.e.*, 12 years. Tirujnanasambandar set her doubts at rest by composing a stanza which said that, though tender, he was more than a match to the strong group of innumerable Jains. While reciting the stanza Sri Bhagavan choked and could not proceed with it.

The second test was the fire leaving the cadjan leaf unburnt, and the third the cadjan leaves opposing the current of the river (Tiruvedakam).

Sri Bhagavan also related the story of God Isvara begging food as an old man, taking food as a youth and saving the devotee woman as a babe, all at once.

He again pointed out 'like babe, lunatic, spirit' (*Balonmattapisachavat*) describing the states of *jnanis*. There babe (*bala*) is given precedence over others.

Talk 416.

Sri Bhagavan said that *Kamba Ramayana* consists of 12,000 stanzas to Valmiki's 24,000. Kamba's can be understood only by the learned and not by all. Tulasidas had heard *Kamba Ramayana* recited to him in Hindi by a Tamil saint and later wrote his famous Ramayana.

Talk 417.

The Perfect Master is a book on Meher Baba published in 1937.

There is an incident of a ship's officer instructing the reluctant Immigration Officer to let Baba and his party land in New York, USA. When one of the party went to thank him he was nowhere to be found.

The incident is recorded so as to leave an impression of a miracle happening in favour of Baba. The passage was read out to Sri Bhagavan.

Bhagavan said: Yes, yes, what of that?

D.: Is it a miracle?

M.: Maybe. But did not the Immigration Officer recognise the other to be his superior officer whose orders should be obeyed? There is an end of the matter. If a man of Baba's party could not find him - well, it may be due to several reasons.

Talk 418.

Asked if Sri Bhagavan had read *Kamba Ramayana*, Sri Bhagavan said: No. I have not read anything. All my learning is limited to what I learnt before my 14th year.

Since then I have had no inclination to read or learn. People wonder how I speak of Bhagavad Gita, etc. It is due to hearsay. I have not read Gita nor waded through commentaries for its meaning. When I hear a sloka I think that its meaning is clear and I say it. That is all and nothing more.

Similarly with my other quotations. They come out naturally. I realise that the Truth is beyond speech and intellect. Why then should I project the mind to read, understand and repeat stanzas, etc.? Their purpose is to know the Truth. The purpose having been gained, there is no use engaging in studies.

Someone remarked: If Sri Bhagavan had been inclined to study there would not be a saint today.

M.: Probably all my studies were finished in past births and I was surfeit. There is therefore no *samskara* operating now in that direction.

Talk 419.

The week before the Mahapuja (3rd June, 1937) has brought many visitors including some relatives of Sri Bhagavan. There is among them an elderly lady - the widow of Subbier in whose house Sri Bhagavan was living when he left home in August 1896.

Old memories revived when Sri Bhagavan saw her.

He remembered how on a festive occasion he was asked to help her in making some *modakas* (delicacies), but he hesitated and finally refused, because he was obliged to change his clothes and he could put on only *koupina* (loin-cloth or codpiece) which made him feel shy. He was reprimanded by his uncle and this lady. The uncle's wife said with humility and gentleness: "Quite. No wonder that one destined for this high state could not do such humble work in those days."

Then Sri Bhagavan remarked, "If I refused to wear *koupina* once, I am now made to pay the penalty by wearing it always."

The lady recalled to her mind how Sri Ramana was suffering from headache for several days together.

Sri Bhagavan said: Yes, yes! It was the month before I left Madura. It was not headache, but an inexpressible anguish which I suppressed at the time; these were however the outward symptoms which, I said, were due to headache. I remember how anxious you grew on account of my headache. You used to rub some ointment on my forehead every day. My anguish continued until I left Madura and reached this place.

4th June, 1937

Talk 420.

A certain lawyer from Cuddalore quoted as follows: "Neither the sun shines there, nor the moon, nor the stars, nor lightning. How can fire shine there? All these luminaries shine in His Light only. With His Light, all these shine forth!" He asked, what does 'with His Light' mean here? Does all else shine on account of Him, or in His Light?

M.: There is only He. He and His Light are the same. There is no individual to perceive other things, because the perceiver and the perceived are only He. The sun, the moon, etc., shine forth. How?

Do they come and tell you that they shine forth or does another apart from them say that they shine forth?

D.: Of course I say that they shine forth.

M.: Therefore they shine on account of you. Again consciousness is necessary to know that they shine forth. That consciousness is your Self or you. So then you or your consciousness is the same as He and His Light by which all else shine forth.

D.: Is that Light like sunlight?

M.: No. The sunlight is *jada* (insentient). You are aware of it. It makes objects perceptible and chases away darkness, whereas consciousness is that Light which makes not only light but also darkness perceptible. Darkness cannot exist before sunlight, but it can remain in the Light of Consciousness. Similarly, this consciousness is pure Knowledge in which both knowledge and ignorance shine.

D.: If God is all why does the individual suffer for his actions? Are not the actions prompted by Him for which the individual is made to suffer?

M.: He who thinks he is the doer is also the sufferer.

D.: But the actions are prompted by God and the individual is only His tool.

M.: This logic is applied only when one suffers, but not when one rejoices. If the conviction prevails always, there will be no suffering either.

D.: When will the suffering cease?

M.: Not until individuality is lost. If both the good and bad actions are His, why should you think that the enjoyment and suffering are alone yours? He who does good or bad, also enjoys pleasure or suffers pain. Leave it there and do not superimpose suffering on yourself.

Talk 421.

A resident devotee, Kunju Swami, related an observation of Sri Maharshi after the robbery in the Asramam in 1923.

Some disciples were asking why the robbers should be allowed to molest even *sadhus* and why the *sadhus* would not protect themselves and their dependents from the robbers.

Sri Bhagavan observed: There were *rishis* like Visvamitra who could duplicate the universe if they wished. They lived during the lifetime of Ravana who caused agony even to Sita and Rama among others. Could not Visvamitra have destroyed Ravana by his occult powers? Though capable he kept still. Why? The occurrences are known to the sages, but pass away without leaving an impression on their minds. Even a deluge will appear a trifle to them; they do not care for anything.

7th June, 1937

Talk 422.

Dr. Venkata Rao, a visitor from Guntur, asked: A Guru asks his disciple to do things contrary to ethical principles. But the disciple, having accepted the person as the master, desires to please the master but his moral sense obstructs him. What should he do under the circumstances?

M.: (No reply).

D.: I shall make myself clear. The Guru asked his disciple to commit a theft and the disciple did not do it. The master then said, "I wanted to test you to see if you had completely surrendered yourself or retained your individuality. It is now clear what it is." Is the Guru right in ordering the disciple that way?

M.: (Still no reply).

Another person observed: There are persons on whom I refuse to sit in judgement. Still I cannot help feeling if they deserve the appellation of Gurus. They appear bogus men. If they be really worthy they would not order the disciples in that way.

M.: But the person says, "It is for a test."

The questioner continued: Should it be carried out?

M.: Your original statement contains the answer to your question.

Both the questioners jointly asked: The action is disagreeable. Can it be done?

M.: The question might be referred to the person himself, *i.e.*, the Guru. He is responsible for the situation.

Talk 423.

A young man asked: I try to cultivate will-power but do not succeed. How should I do it?

M.: (No answer)

D.: I came here three years ago and Sri Bhagavan said that will-power is necessary for strength of mind. Since then I have been desiring to cultivate it but without success.

M.: (No answer)

D.: During these years I have had 4 or 5 reverses. They upset me considerably. There is always the fear of failure haunting my attempts. This results in want of faith in myself which certainly foredooms my efforts to failure. Nothing in fact succeeds like success; and also nothing foils one's attempts like failure. Hence my question.

M.: (No answer).

D.: Is not will-power necessary for success? It should ensure success and also rule out failure.

M.: (No answer)

D.: I try to gain will-power. After these years I find myself only where I began. There is no progress.

M.: (No answer)

D.: What are the means for gaining will-power?

M.: Your idea of will-power is success insured. Will-power should be understood to be the strength of mind which makes it capable for meeting success or failure with equanimity. It is not synonymous with certain success. Why should one's attempts be always attended with success? Success develops arrogance and the man's spiritual progress is thus arrested. Failure on the other hand is beneficial, inasmuch as it opens the eyes of the man to his limitations and prepares him to surrender himself. Self-surrender is synonymous with eternal happiness. Therefore one should try to gain the equipoise of mind under all circumstances. That is will-power. Again, success and failure are the results of *prarabdha* and not of will-power. A man may be doing only good and noble actions and yet prove a failure. Another may do otherwise and yet be uniformly

successful. This does not mean that the will-power is present in the one and not in the other.

D.: Is it not said in the book *Truth Revealed* (*Ulladu Narpadu*) that the world is a product of the mind?

M.: Yes.

D.: Does it not follow that the mind grown strong brings the world under control?

M.: The mind in its external activities gives rise to the world. Such activities fritter away the strength of the mind. Its strength lies in being confined to itself with the external activities arrested.

D.: There is an idiot who cannot count up to ten. His mind does not certainly wander as does that of a thinker. Is the former a better man than the latter?

M.: Who says that he is an idiot? Your mind in its wandering says so.

D.: Is will-power gained by divesting oneself of thoughts?

M.: Rather by confining oneself to a single thought. Ultimately this will also disappear, leaving Pure Consciousness behind. Concentration helps one to it.

D.: So then, it is gained by directing the mind and concentrating it. The personality has nothing to do with it.

M.: Personality is the root-cause of external activities. It must sink for gaining the highest good.

Talk 424.

In the course of conversation with a learned man who asked about *Purusha* and *Prakriti*, Sri Bhagavan said:

Purusha and *Prakriti* are only the bifurcation of the one Supreme. They are surmised because the student has the sense of duality deep rooted. The same Gita also says that *Purushottama* lies beyond *Purusha* and *Prakriti*.

D.: What are *para-nadi*, *Sushumna nadi* and the Heart?

M.: But *Sushumna* resolves into the *para* (*Sushumnatu pareleena*). Heart is usually understood to be the muscular organ lying on the left of the chest. The Modern Psychological Review speaks of the

physical organ on the left and the Heart centre on the right. The Bible says that a fool's heart is on the left and a wise man's on the right. *Yoga Vasishta* says that there are two hearts; the one is *samvit*; and the other the blood-vessel.

D.: What is *Anahata*?

M.: Anahata is the *chakra* lying behind the heart. It is not *samvit*. *Lalita Sahasranama* has it, *Anahata chakrasthayai namo namah* (Salutations to the core situated in *Anahata*) and the next mantra *Hrit* (in the Heart). Thus it is clear that *Anahata* is not the same as *Hrit*.

Talk 425.

Will-power or any other is gained by practice (*abhyasa*).

D.: Is success not dependent on Guru's Grace?

M.: Yes, it is. Is not your practice itself due to such Grace? The fruits are the result of the practice and follow it automatically. There is a stanza in *Kaivalya* which says, "O Guru! You have been always with me watching me through several reincarnations, and ordaining my course until I was liberated." The Self manifests externally as Guru when occasion arises; otherwise He is always within, doing the needful.

12th June, 1937

Talk 426.

Mr. Das, of Allahabad University: Has the food which one usually takes anything to do with increase or decrease of one's spirituality? That is, does it influence spirituality for good or bad?

M.: Yes. *Satvic* food in moderate quantity is helpful to spiritual development.

D.: For a *grihi*, *i.e.*, a man of the world (householder), what conduct in life will help him *most* spiritually?

M.: Dhyana or *bhakti*, which mean the same thing.

D.: What is meant by taking the name of God? How to reconcile the following two ideas?

The Bible says: "Do not take the name of God in vain."

The Hindu *sastras* enjoin taking the name of God all the time.

M.: One should not use the name of God artificially and superficially without feeling. To use the name of God one must call upon Him and surrender to Him unreservedly. After such surrender the name of God is constantly with the man.

D.: What are the fundamental tests for discovering men of great spirituality, since some are reported to behave like insane people?

M.: The *jnani's* mind is known only to the *jnani*. One must be a *jnani* oneself in order to understand another *jnani*. However the peace of mind which permeates the saint's atmosphere is the only means by which the seeker understands the greatness of the saint.

His words or actions or appearance are no indications of his greatness, for they are ordinarily beyond the comprehension of common people.

D.: Has man any Free-Will or is everything in his life predestined and preordained?

M.: Free-Will holds the field in association with individuality. As long as individuality lasts so long there is Free-Will. All the *sastras* are based on this fact and they advise directing the Free-Will in the right channel.

Find out to whom Free-Will or Destiny matters. Abide in it. Then these two are transcended. That is the only purpose of discussing these questions. To whom do these questions arise? Find out and be at peace.

D.: Are intellect and emotion, like the physical body, growths which come with the birth of man; and do they dissolve or survive after death?

M.: Before considering what happens after death, just consider what happens in your sleep. Sleep is only the interval between two waking states. Do they survive that interval?

D.: Yes, they do.

M.: The same holds good for death also. They represent body-consciousness and nothing more. If you are the body they always hold on to you. If you are not the body they do not affect you. The one who was in sleep is now in waking state just speaking. You were not the body in sleep. Are you the body now? Find it out. Then the whole problem is solved.

Similarly, that which is born must die. Whose is the birth? Were you born? If you say you were, of whose birth are you speaking? It is the body which was born and it is that which will die. How do birth and death affect the eternal Self?

Think and say to whom the questions arise. Then you will know.

Talk 427.

D.: It is said that the Universe consists of light and sound. Are these two constituents like the light and sound in the physical world? Can they be seen and heard with the physical organs - eye and ear? Or are they to be experienced only subjectively?

M.: Light and sound correspond to *bindu* and *nada* in *Tantrik* terminology, and to the mind and life-current in the *Vedantic*. They are gross, subtle and transcendental. The organs can perceive the gross aspect; the other aspects are not so perceptible. The subtle can be inferred and the transcendental is only transcendental.

D.: Hinduism lays down reincarnation of the *jiva*. What happens to the *jiva* during the interval between the death of one body and the birth of the next one?

M.: Solve this question by referring to the state of sleep. What happens to you in sleep?

D.: I do not know.

M.: Yet you exist. Therefore existence beyond knowledge and ignorance is indicated. Although ignorance was prevailing, according to your present idea, yet you did not say so in sleep. You continued to exist all the same. Mere ignorance does not rule out the fact of your existence.

D.: In the practice of meditation are there any signs of the nature of subjective experience or otherwise, which will indicate the aspirant's progress towards Self-Realisation

M.: The degree of freedom from unwanted thoughts and the degree of concentration on a single thought are the measure to gauge the progress.

D.: Is it necessary to take to *sanyasa* for Self-Realisation?

M.: Sanyasa is to renounce one's individuality. This is not the same as tonsure and ochre robes. A man may be a *grihi*; yet, if he does not think he is a *grihi*, he is a *sanyasi*. On the contrary a man may

wear ochre robes and wander about: yet if he thinks he is a *sanyasi* he is not that. To think of *sanyasa* defeats its own purpose.

Sri Bhagavan remarked: People see the world. The perception implies the existence of a seer and the seen. The objects are alien to the seer. The seer is intimate, being the Self. They do not however turn their attention to finding out the obvious seer but run about analysing the seen. The more the mind expands, the farther it goes and renders Self-Realisation more difficult and complicated. The man must directly see the seer and realise the Self.

D.: So then, it amounts to synthesising phenomena and finding the one Reality behind.

M.: Why do you still consider the phenomena? See who the seer is. Synthesis means engaging the mind in other pursuits. That is not the way to Realisation.

D.: I want to eliminate the non-self so that the Self may be realised. How shall I do it? What are the characteristics of the non-self?

M.: There is one who says that the non-self must be eliminated. Who is he?

D.: I mean this man. When I travel from Calcutta to Madras I must know Madras so that I may not alight at an intermediate station out of ignorance. There are the sign boards and the timetable to guide me in my travel. But what is the guide in my search for the Self?

M.: It is all right for the journey. You know how far away you are from Madras. Can you tell me how far away you are from the Self in order that you should seek it?

D.: I do not know.

M.: Are you ever divorced from the Self? Is it possible to be divorced? Are not all these alien to you and the Self the most intimate? Where should you go to gain the Self?

D.: I am now away from the Self. I must retrace my steps in order to regain it.

M.: How far away? Who says that he is apart? Can there be two selves?

D.: It is said that individuals are modifications of the Self, just as ornaments are of gold.

M.: When a man speaks in terms of ornaments ignoring their substance gold, he is told that they are gold. But here the man is consciousness and speaks of himself as its modification. Do you remain apart from Self that you speak of yourself as Its modification?

D.: Cannot gold be imagined to say that it has become an ornament?

M.: Being insentient, it does not say so. But the individual is sentient and cannot function apart from consciousness. The Self is Pure Consciousness. Yet the man identifies himself with the body which is itself insentient and does not say "I am the body" of its own accord. Someone else says so. The unlimited Self does not. Who else is he that says so? A spurious 'I' arises between the Pure Consciousness and the insentient body and imagines itself limited to the body. Seek this and it will vanish as a phantom. That phantom is the ego, or the mind or the individuality.

All the *sastras* are based on the rise of this phantom, whose elimination is their purpose. The present state is mere illusion. Disillusionment is the goal and nothing more.

D.: The mind is said to be a bundle of thoughts.

M.: Because it functions on account of a single root the 'I-thought'.

मानसंतु किं मार्गणेकृते नैव मानसं मार्ग आर्जवात्

Manasantu kim margane krte naiva manasam marga arjavat.

It has no real existence as a separate entity.

D.: Are not thoughts projections from the mind?

M.: In that case the mind is taken to be synonymous with the 'I-thought' or the ego.

15th December, 1937

Talk 428.

Sri Bhagavan has selected 10 stanzas from the famous work of Sri Sankara - *Sivananda Lahari* - describing devotion (*bhakti*):

(1) What is *bhakti*?

Just as the *ankola* fruit falling from the tree rejoins it or a piece of iron is drawn to magnet, so also thoughts, after rising up, lose

themselves in their original source. This is *bhakti*. The original source of thoughts is the feet of the Lord, *Isvara*. Love of His Feet forms *bhakti*. (61)

(2) Fruit of *bhakti:*

The thick cloud of *bhakti*, formed in the transcendental sky of the Lord's Feet, pours down a rain of Bliss (*ananda*) and fills the lake of mind to overflowing. Only then the *jiva*, always transmigrating to no useful end, has his real purpose fulfilled. (76)

(3) Where to place *bhakti*?

Devotion to gods, who have themselves their origin and end, can result in fruits similarly with origin and end. In order to be in Bliss everlasting our devotion must be directed to its source, namely the Feet of the ever blissful Lord. (83)

(4) *Bhakti* is a matter only for experience and not for words:

How can Logic or other polemics be of real use? Can the *ghatapatas* (favourite examples of the logicians, meaning the pot and the cloth) save you in a crisis? Why then waste yourself thinking of them and on discussion? Stop exercising the vocal organs and giving them pain. Think of the Feet of the Lord and drink the nectar! (6)

(5) Immortality is the fruit of Devotion:

At the sight of him who in his heart has fixed the Lord's Feet, Death is reminded of his bygone disastrous encounter with Markandeya and flees away.

All other gods worship only Siva, placing their crowned heads at His feet. Such involuntary worship is only natural to Siva.

Goddess Liberation, His consort, always remains part of Him. (65)

(6) If only Devotion be there - the conditions of the *jiva* cannot affect him.

However different the bodies, the mind alone is lost in the Lord's Feet. Bliss overflows! (10)

(7) Devotion always unimpaired:

Wherever or however it be, only let the mind lose itself in the Supreme. It is Yoga! It is Bliss! Or the Yogi or the Bliss incarnate! (12)

(8) Karma Yoga also is *Bhakti*:

To worship God with flowers and other external objects is troublesome. Only lay the single flower, the heart, at the feet of Siva and remain at Peace. Not to know this simple thing and to wander about! How foolish! What misery! (9)

(9) This Karma Yoga puts an end to one's *samsara*:

Whatever the order of life (*asrama*) of the devotee, only once thought of, Siva relieves the devotee of his load of *samsara* and takes it on Himself. (11)

(10) Devotion is *Jnana*:

The mind losing itself in Siva's Feet is Devotion. Ignorance lost! Knowledge! Liberation! (91)

16th December, 1937

Talk 429.

A few ladies had come from Bangalore. One among them asked: The world is composed of differences, from our point of view. How shall we able to get over these differences and comprehend the One Essence of all things?

M.: The differences are the result of the sense of doership (*kartritva*). The fruits will be destroyed if the root is destroyed. So relinquish the sense of doership; the differences will vanish and the essential reality will reveal itself.

In order to give up the sense of doership one must seek to find out who the doer is. Enquire within; the sense of doership will vanish. *Vichara* (enquiry) is the method.

22nd December, 1937

Talk 430.

A Marathi gentleman asked: I have read much about Self-Realisation; I do *japa*, *puja*, etc.; nothing seems to satisfy me. Can Sri Bhagavan kindly guide me?

M.: What is that you seek to gain? Everyone seeks happiness. Happiness is one's lot in everyday sleep. Bring about that state of happiness even in the waking state. That is all.

D.: I do not follow. How is it to be done?

M.: Atma Vichara is the way.

D.: It seems too difficult to adopt, being so intangible. What shall I do if I feel unfit for this method of enquiry?

M.: Guidance is there. It is for individuals to avail themselves of it.

25th December, 1937

Talk 431.

A Telugu gentleman stood up and asked: The mind is said to be pure when all its *vasanas* are wiped out. It is also the finality. When there is something to be gained is it not duality?

M.: Let the mind be first made pure. If the same question arises thereafter the answer may then be sought.

26th December, 1937

Talk 432.

An Andhra visitor asked: What is sleep?

M.: Why, you experience it every day.

D.: I want to know exactly what it is, so that it may be distinguished from *samadhi*.

M.: How can you know sleep when you are awake? The answer is to go to sleep and find out what it is.

D.: But I cannot know it in this way.

M.: This question must be raised in sleep.

D.: But I cannot raise the question then.

M.: So, that is sleep.

Sri Bhagavan went out for a few minutes. On his return the same man asked: Self-realised *jnanis* are seen to take food and do actions like others. Do they similarly experience the states of dream and of sleep?

M.: Why do you seek to know the state of others, maybe *jnanis*? What do you gain by knowing about others? You must seek to know your own real nature.

Who do you think that you are? Evidently, the body.

D.: Yes.

M.: Similarly, you take the *jnani* to be the visible body whereon the actions are superimposed by you. That makes you put these questions. The *jnani* himself does not ask if he has the dream or sleep state. He has no doubts himself. The doubts are in you. This must convince you of your wrong premises. The *jnani* is not the body. He is the Self of all.

The sleep, dream, *samadhi*, etc., are all states of the *ajnanis*. The Self is free from all these. Here is the answer for the former question also.

D.: I sought to know the state of *sthita prajnata* (unshaken knowledge).

M.: The *sastras* are not for the *jnani*. He has no doubts to be cleared. The riddles are for *ajnanis* only. The *sastras* are for them alone.

D.: Sleep is the state of nescience and so it is said of *samadhi* also.

M.: Jnana is beyond knowledge and nescience. There can be no question about that state. It is the Self.

Talk 433.

Mr. Thomas, Professor of Sanskrit, University of Oxford, had presided over the Oriental Conference in Trivandrum and on his way to Calcutta he visited Sri Bhagavan. He is an elderly gentleman with a broad forehead and a quiet manner. He speaks softly and slowly. He evinces great interest in oriental literature, especially Sanskrit. He had heard of the richness of Tamil. He desired to know which of the English translations of *Srimad Bhagavad Gita* was the best. The hall was crowded and a few of them mentioned, with each his own opinion, Thibaut's, Mahadeva Sastri's, Telang's, etc. Sri Bhagavan made mention of F. T. Brooks. Mr. Thomas desires one in metrical form because it is the proper vehicle for *rasa* (the essence) contained in it. *Rasa* is also Peace, he said.

M.: Yes, Brahman is only *rasa*.

D.: Rasa is also Bliss.

M.: Rasa, Ananda, Peace are all names for the same Bliss.

The Professor was shown Mr. Grant Duff's speech in the Philosophical Conference held at Paris. Later the book 'Dharma' by Dr. G. H. Mees

was placed in his hands, on seeing which he asked what Sri Bhagavan thought of castes.

M.: The castes relate to bodies and not to Self. The Self is Bliss. To realise Bliss one realises the Self. No need to worry oneself about caste, etc.

D.: The *ahamkar* is also called the Self.

M.: Ahamkar is limited, whereas the Self is beyond it.

D.: There is much literature in English relating to Eastern philosophy and religion. There are different exponents. The system of Ramanuja is well presented. Prof. Radhakrishnan expounds the *advaitic* system. He lays more stress on experience than on evidence. Sankara shows a highly developed mind.

A discussion followed on direct perception. The Professor spoke of mental perception also as different from sense perception.

M.: To infer one's existence no other evidence is necessary. The *indriyas* (senses) and the mind arising from the ego cannot serve as evidence relating to the Self. The Self is their basis. They do not exist independently of the Self. One's own existence is self-evident. Bliss is the Self. All become dear only owing to the love of Self.

D.: Love postulates duality. How can the Self be the object of love?

M.: Love is not different from the Self. Love of an object is of an inferior order and cannot endure. Whereas the Self is Love, in other words, God is Love.

D.: It is also the Christian idea.

He also asked Sri Bhagavan which of the methods was the best for the attainment of the goal. Is not Patanjali's the best?

M.: Yogas chitta vritti nirodhah - (Yoga is to check the mind from changing) - which is acceptable to all. That is also the goal of all. The method is chosen according to one's own fitness. The goal for all is the same. Yet different names are given to the goal only to suit the process preliminary to reaching the goal. *Bhakti, Yoga, Jnana* are all the same. *Svasvarupanusandhanam bhaktirity abhidheeyate* (Self contemplation is called *bhakti*).

D.: Does Sri Bhagavan advocate *advaita*?

M.: Dvaita and *advaita* are relative terms. They are based on the sense of duality. The Self is as it is. There is neither *dvaita* nor *advaita*. I AM THAT I AM. Simple Being is the Self.

D.: This is not *mayavada*.

M.: The mind is *maya*. Reality lies beyond the mind. So long as the mind functions there is duality, *maya*, etc. Once it is transcended the Reality shines forth. Although it is said to shine forth Self-effulgence is the Self.

D.: It is *Sat-chit-ananda*.

M.: Sat-chit-ananda is said to indicate that the Supreme is not *asat* (different from unreal), not *achit* (different from insentient) and not an *anananda* (different from unhappiness). Because we are in the phenomenal world we speak of the Self as *Sacchidananda*.

D.: Aham 'I' applies to the individual and also to Brahman. It is rather unfortunate.

M.: It is *upadhi bheda* (owing to different limiting adjuncts). The bodily limitations pertain to the *aham* ('I') of the *jiva*, whereas the universal limitations pertain to the *aham* ('I') of Brahman. Take off the *upadhi* (limiting adjunct); the 'I' (*Aham*) is pure and single.

D.: Does Bhagavan give *diksha* (initiation)?

M.: Mowna (silence) is the best and the most potent *diksha*. That was practised by Sri Dakshinamurti. Touch, look, etc., are all of a lower order. Silence (*mowna diksha*) changes the hearts of all. There is no Guru and no disciple.

The *ajnani* confounds his body with the Self and so he takes the other's body for the Guru. But does the Guru think his body to be the Self? He has transcended the body. There are no differences for Him. So the *ajnani* cannot appreciate the standpoint of Guru and of *sishya*.

D.: Is there then no difference between the one and the other?

M.: There are differences from the standpoint of the phenomenal world but not from that of Reality.

The Professor was thankful. He hoped to appreciate Sri Bhagavan's writings better after having seen Him and conversed with Him.

In the course of conversation, Sri Bhagavan said that *upasana* and *dhyana* are possible so long as there is the mind and they must cease

with the cessation of the mind. They are mere preliminaries to final eradication of thoughts and the stillness of mind.

D.: Saiva Siddhanta postulates three fundamentals as being eternal. Is it opposed to *Vedanta*?

M.: The three entities are *jiva,* God and bondage. Such trinities are common in all religions. They are true so long as the mind is operative. They are mere creations of the mind. One can postulate God only after the mind arises. God is not different from the Self. The Self is objectified as God. So also with Guru.

The Professor returned in the evening and asked something about good actions. He further wondered why Brahman is said to be *sacchidananda,* but not God.

M.: Sat denotes being beyond *sat* and *asat*; *Chit* beyond *chit* and *achit*; *Ananda* beyond bliss and non-bliss.

What is it then? Even if not *sat* nor *asat,* It must be admitted to be *sat* only. Compare the term *jnana*. It is the state beyond knowledge and ignorance. Yet *jnana* is not ignorance but knowledge. So also with *Sat-chit-ananda*.

D.: It favours the one aspect.

After a word about *Atma-vichara* he took leave saying that he would not trouble Sri Maharshi any further although he had several doubts yet to be cleared and that he wanted to make *nididhyasana* of what he had heard so far.

A judge from Mysore asked: Upasana and *dhyana* were said to be due to mental activities. Cessation of activities was also said to be Realisation. Now, how to realise without *upasana* or *dhyana*?

M.: They are preliminaries. Such action will lead to the desired inaction.

D.: The Heart is said to be experienced on the right. Physiologically it is on the left.

M.: Spiritual experience is spoken of.

D.: Is it the psychic heart?

M.: Yes.

D.: How to know that it is on the right?

M.: By experience.

D.: Is there any indication to that effect?

M.: Point out to yourself and see.

28th December, 1937

Talk 434.

Being Christmas holidays, there is a great rush of visitors from far and near. A group of them sat down and two among them asked as follows:

D.: Do you know English?

Prompted to ask questions, he continued:

D.: Have you realised your Self?

Sri Bhagavan smiled and said, "Go on, continue."

D.: Have you experienced *nirvikalpa samadhi*?

He was asked to finish his questions.

D.: Can you enter into *nirvikalpa samadhi* at will? Is it not necessary that sages should influence their surroundings?

Another man asked: Can Sri Bhagavan help us to realise the Truth?

M.: Help is always there.

D.: Then there is no need to ask questions. I do not feel the ever-present help.

M.: Surrender and you will find it.

D.: I am always at your feet. Will Bhagavan give us some *upadesha* to follow? Otherwise how can I get the help living 600 miles away?

M.: That *Sadguru* is within.

D.: Sadguru is necessary to guide me to understand it.

M.: The *Sadguru* is within.

D.: I want a visible Guru.

M.: That visible Guru says that He is within.

D.: Can I throw myself at the mercy of the *Sadguru*?

M.: Yes. Instructions are necessary only so long as one has not surrendered oneself.

D.: Is no particular time necessary for meditation?

M.: Meditation depends on strength of mind. It must be unceasing, even when one is engaged in work. Particular time is meant for novices.

D.: Will *Sadguru* place His hand on my head to assure me of His help? I will have the consolation that His promise will be fulfilled.

M.: A bond will be the next requisition and a suit will be filed if you imagine no help forthcoming. (Laughter).

D.: May I come near, Sir? (for blessing).

M.: Such doubts should not arise in you. They contradict your statement of surrender. *Sadguru* is always on your head.

D.: Surrender comes after effort.

M.: Yes, it becomes complete in due course.

D.: Is a teacher necessary for instructions?

M.: Yes, if you want to learn anything new. But here you have to unlearn.

D.: Yet a teacher is necessary.

M.: You have already got what you seek elsewhere. So no teacher is necessary.

D.: Is there any use of the man of Realisation for the seeker?

M.: Yes. He helps you to get rid of your delusion that you are not realised.

D.: So, tell me how.

M.: The paths are meant only to de-hypnotise the individual.

D.: De-hypnotise me. Tell me what method to follow.

M.: Where are you now? Where should you go?

D.: I know 'I am'; but I do not know what I am.

M.: Are there two 'I's then?

D.: It is begging the question.

M.: Who says this? Is it the one who is, or is it the other who does not know what he is?

D.: I am, but do not know what or how?

M.: 'I' is always there.

D.: Does the 'I' undergo any transformation, say in death?

M.: Who witnesses the transformation?

D.: You seem to speak *Jnana yoga*. This is *Jnana yoga*.

M.: Yes, it is.

D.: But surrender is *bhakti yoga*.

M.: Both are the same

After some time the man continued: Then I have to conclude that I am Consciousness and that nothing occurs except by my presence.

M.: It is one thing to conclude it by reasoning and another thing to be convinced.

The other man continued: I shall wait three months and see if help is forthcoming. Now, may I have the assurance?

M.: Is this what is asked by one who has surrendered?

Four visitors retired. The same man continued to say "Fulfil your promise." (Laughter).

He also said: God has given me enough for bread and butter and I am happy. In addition I want peace of mind. Hence this request.

29th December, 1937

Talk 435.

Two ladies and two gentlemen from Ceylon.

D.: Have you realised God? If so, in what shape?

M.: Who remains there to see God? The question might well be if one has known oneself.

D.: I have known myself.

M.: Is the 'I' different from the Self that you say you have known the Self?

D.: I know the Self as identical with the body. If the Self be different from the body let Bhagavan tell me how to see the Self separate from the body. He has realised God. He can teach me.

M.: Why should the Self be separated from the body? Let the body remain as it is.

D.: The soul when disembodied can see through all bodies.

M.: Are there others then? Or is there even your own body? Consider your sleep - You do not know your body then. But still you are there all

the same. Did you then perceive the world through this or other bodies? Nevertheless, you cannot deny your existence then. There must be a subject to see the world and the subject must also be limited. If unlimited how can there be others beside the unlimited Self?

D.: Does God have any limits?

M.: Leave God alone. What limits were there for your Self in your sleep?

D.: Death must then be the highest state.

M.: Yes. We are now living in Death. Those who have limited the unlimited Self have committed suicide by putting on such limitations.

D.: Concentrate on the Self, you say. How to do it?

M.: If that is solved everything else is solved.

D.: Know thyself, you say. How to know the Self?

M.: You now know that you are the body.

D.: Raja yoga realises through the body, senses, etc., and Sri Bhagavan advises realisation by thinking. This is *jnana yoga*.

M.: How can you think without the body?

D.: God does not think.

M.: Why then did you start asking, "In what shape did you see God?"

D.: God must be felt through the senses.

M.: Are you not feeling God?

D.: Is everybody feeling God always?

M.: Yes.

D.: Then what is realisation?

M.: Realisation is to get rid of the delusion that you have not realised.

D.: I don't catch the point.

They left, having taken a snapshot.

Talk 436.

D.: What is *visvarupa*?

M.: It is to see the world as the Self of God. In the *Bhagavad Gita* God is said to be various things and beings, and also the whole universe. How to realise it or see it so? Can one see one's Self? Though not seen, can the Self be denied? What is the Truth?

D.: Is it then wrong to say that some have seen it?

M.: It is true in the same degree as you are. The *Gita* begins saying that no one was born; in the fourth chapter it says, "the numerous incarnations, yours and mine, have taken place; I know them but you do not." Of these two statements, which is the truth? The instruction is according to the listener's understanding. If the second chapter contains the whole Truth, why should so many more chapters follow it?

In the *Bible* God says "I AM before Abraham." He does not say "I was" but "I AM."

Talk 437.

M.: People have read of Vivekananda having asked Sri Ramakrishna, "Have you seen God?" and imitate him now. They also ask, "Have you realised God?"

I ask what is *realisation*.

Realisation implies perfection. When you are limited, your perception also is limited. Your knowledge is thus imperfect. Of what value is that imperfect knowledge?

In *Visvarupa Darsan*, Arjuna is told to see whatever he desired and not what was presented before him. How can that *darsan* be real?

30th December, 1937

Talk 438.

A visitor asked: For beginners like me which is most suited: either worship of qualified God or contemplation of "I am Brahman"?

M.: The answer is contained in the question. The question itself shows it to be worship of qualified God.

D.: "I" is felt in the waking and dream states but not in deep sleep. Why so?

M.: If so, does it not exist in deep sleep?

D.: Because there are mental modes in these two states and no such mode in the other.

Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

Volume III

3rd January, 1938

Talk 439.

D.: Rama asks: "Brahman being Pure, how can *maya* arise from Him and veil Him also? "Vasishta replies: "In pure mind associated with strong dispassion this question will not arise." Of course in *advaita* (non-dualistic) philosophy there can be no place for *jiva, Isvara* and *maya*. Oneself sinking into the Self, the *vasanas* (tendencies) will entirely disappear, leaving no room for such a question.

M.: The answers will be according to the capacity of the seeker. It is said in the second chapter of *Gita* that no one is born or dies: but in the fourth chapter Sri Krishna says that numerous incarnations of His and of Arjuna had taken place, all known to Him but not to Arjuna. Which of these statements is true? Both statements are true, but from different standpoints. Now a question is raised: How can *jiva* rise up from the Self? I must answer. Only know Your Real Being, then you will not raise this question.

Why should a man consider himself separate? How was he before being born or how will he be after death? Why waste time in such discussions? What was your form in deep sleep? Why do you consider yourself as an individual?

D.: My form remains subtle in deep sleep.

M.: As is the effect so is the cause. As is the tree so is its seed. The whole tree is contained in the seed which later manifests as the tree. The expanded tree must have a substratum which we call *maya*. As a matter of truth there is neither seed nor tree. There is only Being.

D.: Vasanakshaya (total end of all predispositions) - *Mano nasa* (annihilation of mind) - *Atma-sakshatkara* (Realisation of the Self). They seem to be interdependent.

M.: The different expressions have only one meaning. They differ according to the individual's stage of progress. Dispassion, Realisation, all mean the same thing; also they say 'practice and dispassion'. Why practice? Because the modes of mind once subside and then rise up; again subside and rise up, and so on.

D.: Beginningless predisposition makes one do wrong. Without *jnana* this predisposition cannot vanish. But *jnana* looks almost impossible. Expiation alone cannot undo all the karma; for how much expiation will be needed! Look where we will! Everything looks difficult, even impossible. Association with the wise seems to be the only cure of all ills.

M.: What is to be done? Reality is One only. How can It be realised? Realisation is thus an illusion. Practice seems to be necessary. Who is to practise? Looking for the doer, the act and the accessories disappear.

Moreover, if Realisation is not present here and now, how can It, newly got, be of any use? What is permanent must be eternally present. Can it be newly got and be permanent also?

Realise what is present here and now. The sages did so before and still do that only. Hence they say that it looks as if newly got. Once veiled by ignorance and later revealed, Reality looks as if newly realised. But it is not new.

D.: Karma, *bhakti*, *yoga* and *jnana* and their subdivisions only confuse the mind. To follow the elders' words seems to be the only right thing to do. What should I hold? Please tell me. I cannot sift the *srutis* and *smritis*; they are too vast. So please advise me.

(No answer.)

Talk 440.

D.: Without logic, without learned terminology, please instruct me the way to the Bliss of Self. Let it be of Guru's grace only.

M.: Have a clear idea of your requirement. Who seeks to gain what? Then ask the method.

D.: Bliss manifests occasionally but I am unable to describe it. At times there is illumination, but is it the Reality? If so, how to make

it permanent? The method must be simple. Please make it clear without logic, learned discussions or mystifying words.

(No answer.)

Another visitor asked: Please tell me which is the most efficacious of all the methods, *e.g*., prayer to God, Guru *anugraha*, *i.e*., master's grace, concentration of mind, etc.

M.: The one is the consequence of the other. Each of them leads to the next stage. They form a continuous whole. God, Guru, and the Self are not different. They are one and the same. Therefore the methods offer no choice.

Talk 441.

Mr. Pannalal, I. C. S., a high Government official from Allahabad, with his wife, a highly cultured lady, and Mr. Brijnarayan, a retired judge, were on a visit for a week. The night previous to their departure they wanted to have their doubt cleared. Their doubt was:

We had a great sage for our Guru. He advised us to "take the name of Hari," saying that it is all in all; no effort is necessary for concentrating the mind. Concentration will come of itself if Harinam is persisted in. So we are doing it. The Guru passed away. We felt like a rudderless ship in mid-ocean. In our anxiety to find a safe guide we read and heard of you and so desired to come here. Our desire has been fulfilled after two years' longing. On coming here and hearing Sri Bhagavan we understand that the Master teaches *Atma-vichara* (self-quest). This is the method of knowledge (*jnana marga*), whereas the other master taught us *bhakti marga* (method of devotion).

What shall we do now? Are we to give up the other method and take to this new method? If once we change shall we not change many times more according to the masters we meet? What progress can be made by such frequent changes? Pray remove this doubt and bless us.

The Master referred the gentleman to an article in the September number of *Vision*, a monthly journal issued by the Anandasram. Kanhangad.

PHILOSOPHY OF THE DIVINE NAME ACCORDING TO ST. NAMDEV

The name permeates the entire universe densely; who can tell to what depths in the nether regions and to what height in the heaven It extends?

The ignorant fools undergo the eighty-four lakhs of species of births, not knowing the essence of things. The Name is immortal. Forms are innumerable but Name is all that. The Name itself is form and form itself is Name. There is no distinction between Name and form. God became manifest and assumed Name and form. Hence the Name the Vedas have established. Beware, there is no mantram beyond the Name. Those who say otherwise are ignorant fools. Name is Keshava Himself. This is known only to the loving devotees of the Lord.

The all-pervading nature of the Name can only be understood when one recognises his own 'I'. When one's own name is not recognised, it is impossible to get all-pervading Name. When one knows oneself then one finds the Name everywhere.

None can realise the Name by the practice of knowledge, meditation or austerity. Surrender yourself at first at the feet of the Guru and learn to know who the 'I' in you is. After finding the source of that 'I', merge your individuality in that Oneness - which is Self-existent and devoid of all duality. It is that Name that permeates the three worlds.

The Name is *Paramatman* Itself where there is no action arising out of *dvaita* (duality).

8th January, 1938

Talk 442.

While explaining a stanza of his own Sri Bhagavan observed: The sun illumines the universe, whereas the Sun of Arunachala is so dazzling that the universe is obscured and an unbroken brilliance remains. But it is not realised in the present state and can be realised only if the lotus of the heart blossoms. The ordinary lotus blossoms in the light of the visible sun, whereas the subtle Heart blossoms only before the Sun of Suns. May Arunachala make my heart blossom so that His unbroken brilliance may shine all alone!

Further on, Sri Bhagavan continued: The mirror reflects objects; yet they are not real because they cannot remain apart from the mirror.

Similarly, the world is said to be a reflection in the mind as it does not remain in the absence of mind. The question arises: if the universe is a reflection, there must be a real object known as the universe in order that it might be reflected in the mind. This amounts to an admission of the existence of an objective universe. Truly speaking, it is not so.

Therefore the dream illustration is set forth. The dream world has no objective existence. How then is it created? Some mental impressions should be admitted. They are called *vasanas*. How were the *vasanas* in the mind? The answer is: they were subtle. Just as a whole tree is contained potentially in a seed, so the world is in the mind.

Then it is asked: A seed is the product of the tree which must have existed once in order that it may be reproduced. So the world also must have been there some time. The answer is, No! There must have been several incarnations to gather the impressions which are re-manifested in the present form. I must have existed before as I do now. The straight way to find an answer will be to see if the world is there. Admitting the existence of the world I must admit a seer who is no other than myself. Let me find myself so that I may know the relation between the world and the seer. When I seek the Self and abide as the Self there is no world to be seen. What is the Reality then? The seer only and certainly not the world.

Such being the truth the man continues to argue on the basis of the reality of the world. Whoever asked him to accept a brief for the world?

Yoga Vasishta clearly defines Liberation as the abandonment of the false and remaining as Being.

Talk 443.

A visitor asked: The illustration of the mirror relates to the sense of sight only. The world is perceived by the other senses also. Can the unreality be established in relation to the other senses as well?

M.: A figure on the screen in the cinema show appears to watch the whole world. What is the reality behind the subject and the object in the same show? An illusory being watches an illusory world.

D.: But I am the witness of the show.

M.: Certainly you are. You and the world are as real as the cinema figure and the cinema world.

Talk 444.

An advocate visitor: The mind becomes aware of the world through the senses. When the senses are active, one cannot help feeling the existence of the world. How can karma yoga be of any use for pure awareness?

M.: The world is perceived by the mind through the senses. It is of the mind. The seer sees the mind and the senses as within the Self and not apart from it. The agent, remaining unaffected by the actions, gets more purified until he realises the Self.

9th January, 1938

Talk 445.

Explaining a stanza in *Aksharamanamalai* Sri Bhagavan said that *mowna* is the highest form of *upadesa*. It signifies 'silence' as master, disciple and practiser. Three *sanyasins*, who were visiting Sri Bhagavan, began a discussion.

D.: If one remained quiet how is action to go on? Where is the place for karma yoga?

M.: Let us first understand what Karma is, whose Karma it is and who is the doer. Analysing them and enquiring into their truth, one is perforce obliged to remain as the Self in peace. Nevertheless the actions will go on.

D.: How will the actions go on if I do not act?

M.: Who asks this question? Is it the Self or another? Is the Self concerned with actions?

D.: No, not the Self. It is another, different from the Self.

M.: So it is plain that the Self is not concerned with actions and the question does not arise.

D.: I agree.

Another asked: What is the state of the realised man? Is he not acting?

M.: The question implies that the realised man is not the questioner. Why should you concern yourself with another? Your duty is to look to yourself and not ask of others.

D.: The scriptures hold him up as the ideal.

M.: Certainly. He is the ideal. You should realise the Self. Even if his state be now described, your understanding of it will be only according to your capacity. You admit that your capacity is limited.

The scriptures say that the realised state admits of no limits. So then, the only way to understand his state is to realise the Self and experience the state. If the question arises afterwards the answer will be found.

Another visitor asked: There is differentiation made between the sentient and the insentient (*chit* and *jada*) in the opening verse of *Upadesa Sara*.

M.: The *Upadesa* is from the standpoint of the hearer. There is no truth in the insentient (*jada*). One whole consciousness (*chit*) prevails all alone.

24th January, 1938

Talk 446.

Mr. Grant Duff was in the hall. Sri Bhagavan was mentioning some new publications and *Maha Yoga* among others. He also remarked that Mr. G. D. having read *Sat Darsana Bhashya* would be surprised at the different view of *Maha Yoga*. Both claim to represent Sri Bhagavan's philosophy; but they differ so much that *Maha Yoga* actually condemns the other.

Someone cited the curious claim of *Sat Darsana Bhashya* that individuality is retained even after the loss of ego.

Sri Bhagavan remarked:

What is to be done? The Upanishads say: *Brahmavid Brahmaiva bhavati* (Knower of Brahman becomes Brahman). There are more than one *Brahmavid* at a time. "Are all of them the same? Are they not separate?" So ask some persons. They look to the bodies only. They do not look to the realisation. There is no difference in the realisation of the *Brahmavid*. That is the Truth. But when the question is raised from the standpoint of the body the reply is necessarily bound to be "Yes. They are different". This is the cause of the confusion.

Mr. G. Duff: The Buddhists deny the world; the Hindu philosophy admits its existence, but says that it is unreal. Am I right?

M.: The difference of view is according to the difference in the angles of vision.

D.: They say that Sakti creates the world. Is the knowledge of unreality due to the unveiling of *maya*?

M.: All admit Sakti's creation. What is the nature of the Creatrix? It can only be in conformity with the nature of the creation. The Creatrix is of the same nature as Her creation.

D.: Are there degrees of illusion?

M.: Illusion is itself illusory. Illusion must be seen by one beyond it. Can such a seer be subject to illusion? Can he then speak of degrees of illusion?

There are scenes floating on the screen in a cinema show. Fire appears to burn buildings to ashes. Water seems to wreck vessels. But the screen on which the pictures are projected remains unscorched and dry. Why?

Because the pictures are unreal and the screen is real.

Again reflections pass through a mirror; but the mirror is not in any way affected by the quality or quantity of the reflections on it.

So the world is a phenomenon on the single Reality, which is not affected in any manner. Reality is only one.

The discussion about illusion is due to the difference in the angle of vision. Change your angle of vision to one of *jnana* and then find the universe to be only Brahman. Being now in the world, you see the world as such. Get beyond it and this will disappear: the Reality alone will shine.

Talk 447.

Sri Bhagavan said that a saint Namah Sivaya who was formerly living in Arunachala must have undergone considerable difficulties. For he has sung a song saying: "God proves the devotee by means of severe ordeals. A washerman beats the cloth on a slab, not to tear it, but only to remove the dirt."

25th January, 1938

Talk 448.

LITERAL TRANSLATION OF NAMDEV'S "PHILOSOPHY OF THE DIVINE NAME."

I. The Name permeates densely the sky and the lowest regions and the entire universe. Who can tell to what depths in the nether regions and to what height in the heavens It extends? The ignorant undergo the eighty-four lakhs of species of births, not knowing the essence of things. Namdev says the Name is immortal. Forms are innumerable, but the Name is all that.

II. The Name itself is form; and form itself is Name. There is no distinction between Name and form. God became manifest and assumed Name and form. Hence the Name the Vedas have established. Beware, there is no *mantra* beyond the Name. Those who say otherwise are ignorant. Namdev says the Name is Keshava Himself. This is known only to the loving devotees of the Lord.

III. The all-pervading nature of the Name can only be understood when one recognises his 'I'. When one's own name is not recognised, it is impossible to get the all-pervading Name. When one knows oneself, then one finds the Name everywhere. To see the Name as different from the Named creates illusion. Namdev says, "Ask the Saints."

IV. None can realise the Name by practice of knowledge, meditation or austerity. Surrender yourself first at the feet of the Guru and learn to know that 'I' myself is that Name. After finding the source of that 'I', merge your individuality in that one-ness, which is Self-existent and devoid of all duality. That which pervades beyond *dwaita* and *dwaitatita*, that Name has come into the three worlds. The Name is *Para Brahman* itself, where there is no action arising out of duality.

When Sri Bhagavan had read this, a certain musician came into the hall and began to sing Tyagaraja *Kirtanas* in Telugu. One of them says: "Find the source of the sound which is transcendental (*mooladhara sabda*) by diving deep like a pearl-diver diving for pearls." Then again another song was: "For a man who has controlled his mind where is the use of *tapasya*? Give up 'I-am-the-body' idea and realise 'I am not; Thou art all'."

This song was translated to Mr. G. D. who was then in the hall.

Mr. G. D. asked: Is it necessary to control one's breath? What becomes of the man who has not practised breath-control?

M.: Breath-control is only an aid for diving deep. One may as well dive down by control of mind. On the mind being controlled, the breath becomes controlled automatically. One need not attempt breath-control; mind-control is enough. Breath-control is recommended for the man who cannot control his mind straightaway.

Naham - I am not this - corresponds to *rechaka*

Koham - Who am I? (search for the I) - corresponds to *puraka*

Soham - He am I; (The Self alone) - corresponds to *kumbhaka*.

So these are the functions of *pranayama*.

Again the three formulae are:

Na - Aham (Not - I).

Ka - Aham (Who - I).

Sa - Aham (He - I).

Delete the prefixes and hold on to the common factor in all of them. That is *Aham*-'I', that is the gist of the whole matter.

Later on Sri Bhagavan referred to the songs and said: Tyagaraja says well. The mind should be controlled. The question arises "What is mind?" He himself answers in the next couplet, saying that it is the "I-am-the-body" idea. The next question is how the control is effected. He answers again, saying "By complete surrender. Realise that I am not and that all is He." The song is fine and compact. He also mentions the other method, namely, control of breath.

31st January, 1938

Talk 449.

After Mr. G. D. had left, there was some reference to his visit to the Asramam. Sri Bhagavan remarked, "Some *Sakti* draws people from all parts of the globe to this centre." A devotee aptly said, "That *Sakti* is not different from Sri Bhagavan." Sri Bhagavan immediately remarked, "What *Sakti* drew me here originally? The same *Sakti* draws all others as well."

Sri Bhagavan was, happily, in the mood to relate the following stories.

I. There was king with a devoted queen. She was a devotee of Sri Rama and yearned that her husband should similarly be a devotee. One night she found that the king mumbled something in his sleep. She kept her ears close to his lips and heard the word 'Rama' repeated continually as in *japa*. She was delighted and the next day ordered the minister to hold a feast. The king having partaken of the feast asked his wife for an explanation. She related the whole occurrence and said that the feast was in gratitude to God for the fulfilment of her long cherished wish. The king was however annoyed that his devotion should have been found out. Some say that having thus betrayed God he considered himself unworthy of God and so committed suicide. It means that one should not openly display one's piety. We may take it that the king told the queen not to make a fuss over his piety and they then lived happily together.

II. THONDARADIPODI (*Bhaktanghrirenu*) ALWAR: One who delights in the dust of the feet of devotees. A devotee (of this name) was keeping a plot of land in which he grew *tulasi*, the sacred basil, made garlands of it, and supplied the same to the God in the temple. He remained a bachelor and was respected for his life and conduct. One day two sisters, who lived by prostitution, walked near the garden and sat under a tree. One of them said, "How disgusting is my life that I soil my body and mind every day. This man's life is most desirable." The other replied, "How do you know his mind? Maybe he is not as good as he appears to be. The bodily functions may be forcibly controlled and the mind may be revelling in riotous thoughts. One cannot control one's *vasanas* as easily as the physical frame."

The former said, "The actions are only the indices of the mind. His life shows his mind to be pure."

The other said, "Not necessarily. His mind has not been proved as yet."

The first challenged her to prove his mind. She accepted. The second desired to be left alone with only a shred of garment in which to clothe herself. The first sister returned home, leaving the other alone with flimsy clothing. As the latter continued to remain under the tree, she appeared penitent and humble. The saint noticed her and approached her after some time. He asked what had happened to her

that she looked so lowly. She pleaded penitence for her past life, desired to lead a purer and nobler life and finished with a prayer to him to accept her humble services in the garden or attendance on himself. He advised her to return home and lead a normal life. But she protested. So he detained her for watering the *tulasi* plants. She accepted the function with delight and began to work in the garden.

One rainy night this woman was found standing under the eaves of the thatched shed in which the saint was. Her clothes were dripping and she was shivering with cold. The master asked why she was in such a pitiable state. She said that her place was exposed to the rains and so she sought shelter under the eaves and that she would retire as soon as the rain ceased. He asked her to move into the hut and later told her to change her wet clothes. She did not have dry cloth to put on. So he offered her one of his own clothes. She wore it, still later she begged permission to massage his feet. He consented. Eventually they embraced.

The next day she returned home, had good food and wore fine clothes. She still continued to work in the garden.

Sometimes she used to remain long in her home. Then this man began to visit her there until he finally lived with her. Nevertheless he did not neglect the garden nor the daily garlands for God. There was public scandal regarding his change of life. God then resolved to restore him to his old ways and so assumed the shape of the saintly devotee himself. He appeared to the *dasi* and secretly offered her a rich present, an anklet of God.

She was very pleased with it and hid it under her pillow. He then disappeared. All these were secretly observed by a maid servant in the house.

The ornament was found missing in the temple. The worshipper reported the loss to the proper authorities. They offered a tempting reward for anyone who would give the clue for the recovery of the lost property. The maid servant afforded the clue and claimed the reward. The police recovered the ornament and arrested the *dasi* who said that the devotee gave her the same. He was then roughly handled. A supernatural voice said. “I did it. Leave him alone.”

The king and all others were surprised. They fell prostrate at the man's feet and set him free. He then led a better and nobler life.

III. KADUVELI SIDHAR was famed as a very austere hermit. He lived on the dry leaves fallen from trees. The king of the country heard of him, saw him and offered a reward for the one who would prove this man's worth. A rich *dasi* agreed to do it. She began to live near the recluse and pretended to attend on him. She gently left pieces of *pappadam* along with the dry leaves picked by him. When he had eaten them she began to leave other kinds of tasty food along with the dry leaves. Eventually he took good tasty dishes supplied by her. They became intimate and a child was born to them. She reported the matter to the king.

The king wanted to know if she could prove their mutual relationship to the general public. She agreed and suggested a plan of action. Accordingly the king announced a public dancing performance by that *dasi* and invited the people to it. They gathered there and she also appeared, but not before she had given a dose of physic to the child and left it in charge of the saint at home.

The dance was at its height here; the child was crying at home for the mother. The father took the babe in his arms and went to the dancing performance. She was dancing hilariously. He could not approach her with the child. She noticed the man and the babe. She contrived to kick her legs in the dance so as to unloose one of her anklets just as she approached the place where the saint was. She gently lifted her foot and he tied the anklet. The public shouted and laughed. But he remained unaffected. Yet to prove his worth, he sang a Tamil song meaning:

> "For victory, let go my anger! I release my mind when it rushes away. If it is true that I sleep day and night quite aware of my Self, may this stone burst into twain and become the wide expanse!"

Immediately the stone (idol) burst with a loud noise The people were astounded.

Sri Bhagavan continued:

Thus he proved himself an unswerving *jnani*. One should not be deceived by the external appearance of *jnani*. Thus *Vedantachudamani* - V. 181.

Its meaning is as follows:

Although a *jivanmukta* associated with body may, owing to his *prarabdha*, appear to lapse into ignorance or wisdom, yet he is only pure like the ether (*akasa*) which is always itself clear. whether covered by dense clouds or cleared of clouds by currents of air. He always revels in the Self alone, like a loving wife taking pleasure with her husband alone, though she attends on him with things obtained from others (by way of fortune, as determined by her *prarabdha*). Though he remains silent like one devoid of learning, yet his supineness is due to the implicit duality of the *vaikhari vak* (spoken words) of the Vedas; his silence is the highest expression of the realised non-duality which is after all the true content of the Vedas. Though he instructs his disciples, yet he does not pose as a teacher, in the full conviction that the teacher and disciple are mere conventions born of illusion (*maya*), and so he continues to utter words (like *akasvani*); if on the other hand he mutters words incoherently like a lunatic, it is because his experience is inexpressible like the words of lovers in embrace. If his words are many and fluent like those of an orator, they represent the recollection of his experience, since he is the unmoving non-dual One without any desire awaiting fulfilment. Although he may appear grief-stricken like any other man in bereavement, yet he evinces just the right love of and pity for the senses which he earlier controlled before he realised that they were mere instruments and manifestations of the Supreme Being. When he seems keenly interested in the wonders of the world, he is only ridiculing the ignorance born of superimposition. If he appears indulging in sexual pleasures, he must be taken to enjoy the ever-inherent Bliss of the Self, which, divided Itself into the Individual Self and the Universal Self, delights in their reunion to regain Its original Nature. If he appears wrathful he means well to the offenders. All his actions should be taken to be only divine manifestations on the plane of humanity. There should not arise even the least doubt as to his being emancipated while yet alive. He lives only for the good of the world.

Sri Bhagavan now warned the hearers against the mistake of disparaging a *jnani* for his apparent conduct and again cited the story of Parikshit. He was a still-born child. The ladies cried and appealed to Sri Krishna to save the child. The sages round about wondered how Krishna was going

to save the child from the effects of the arrows (*apandavastra*) of Asvatthama. Krishna said, "If the child be touched by one eternally celibate (*nityabrahmachari*) the child would be brought to life." Even Suka dared not touch the child. Finding no one among the reputed saints bold enough to touch the child, Krishna went and touched it, saying, "If I am eternally celibate (*nityabrahmachari*) may the child be brought to life." The child began to breathe and later grew up to be Parikshit.

Just consider how Krishna surrounded by 16,000 *gopis* is a *brahmachari*! Such is the mystery of *jivanmukti*! A *jivanmukta* is one who does not see anything separate from the Self.

If however a man consciously attempts to display *siddhis* he will receive only kicks.

3rd February, 1938

Talk 450.

Miss Umadevi, a Polish lady convert to Hinduism, asked Sri Bhagavan: I once before told Sri Bhagavan how I had a vision of Siva at about the time of my conversion to Hinduism. A similar experience recurred to me at Courtallam. These visions are momentary. But they are blissful. I want to know how they might be made permanent and continuous. Without Siva there is no life in what I see around me. I am so happy to think of Him. Please tell me how His vision may be everlasting to me.

M.: You speak of a vision of Siva. Vision is always of an object. That implies the existence of a subject. The value of the vision is the same as that of the seer. (That is to say, the nature of the vision is on the same plane as that of the seer.) Appearance implies disappearance also. Whatever appears must also disappear. A vision can never be eternal. But Siva is eternal

The *pratyaksha* (vision) of Siva to the eye signifies the existence of the eyes to see; the *buddhi* (intellect) lying behind the sight; the seer behind the *buddhi* and the sight; and finally the Consciousness underlying the seer. This *pratyaksha* (vision) is not as real as one imagines it to be, because it is not intimate and inherent; it is not first-hand. It is the result of several successive phases of Consciousness. Of these, Consciousness alone does not vary. It is eternal. It is Siva. It is the Self.

The vision implies the seer. The seer cannot deny the existence of the Self. There is no moment when the Self as Consciousness does not exist; nor can the seer remain apart from Consciousness. This Consciousness is the eternal Being and the only Being. The seer cannot see himself. Does he deny his existence because he cannot see himself with the eyes as *pratyaksha* (in vision)? No! So, *pratyaksha* does not mean seeing, but BE-ing.

"To BE" is to realise - Hence I AM THAT I AM. I AM is Siva. Nothing else can be without Him. Everything has its being in Siva and because of Siva.

Therefore enquire "Who am I?" Sink deep within and abide as the Self. That is Siva as BE-ing. Do not expect to have visions of Him repeated. What is the difference between the objects you see and Siva? He is both the subject and the object. You cannot be without Siva. Siva is always realised here and now. If you think you have not realised Him it is wrong. This is the obstacle for realising Siva. Give up that thought also and realisation is there.

D.: Yes. But how shall I effect it as quickly as possible?

M.: This is the obstacle for realisation. Can there be the individual without Siva? Even now He is you. There is no question of time. If there be a moment of non-realisation, the question of realisation can arise. But as it is you cannot be without Him. He is already realised, ever realised and never non-realised.

Surrender to Him and abide by His will whether he appears or vanishes; await His pleasure. If you ask Him to do as you please, it is not surrender but command to Him. You cannot have Him obey you and yet think that you have surrendered. He knows what is best and when and how to do it. Leave everything entirely to Him. His is the burden: you have no longer any cares. All your cares are His. Such is surrender. This is *bhakti*.

Or, enquire to whom these questions arise. Dive deep in the Heart and remain as the Self. One of these two ways is open to the aspirant.

Sri Bhagavan also added: There is no being who is not conscious and therefore who is not Siva. Not only is he Siva but also all else of which he is aware or not aware. Yet he thinks in sheer ignorance that

he sees the universe in diverse forms. But if he sees his Self he is not aware of his separateness from the universe; in fact his individuality and the other entities vanish although they persist in all their forms. Siva is seen as the universe. But the seer does not see the background itself. Think of the man who sees only the cloth and not the cotton of which it is made; or of the man who sees the pictures moving on the screen in a cinema show and not the screen itself as the background; or again the man who sees the letters which he reads but not the paper on which they are written. The objects are thus Consciousness and forms. But the ordinary person sees the objects in the universe but not Siva in these forms. Siva is the Being assuming these forms and the Consciousness seeing them. That is to say, Siva is the background underlying both the subject and the object, and again Siva in Repose and Siva in Action, or Siva and Sakti, or the Lord and the Universe. Whatever it is said to be, it is only Consciousness whether in repose or in action. Who is there that is not conscious? So, who is not realised? How then can questions arise doubting realisation or desiring it? If 'I' am not *pratyaksha* to me, I can then say that Siva is not *pratyaksha*.

These questions arise because you have limited the Self to the body, only then the ideas of within and without, of the subject and the object, arise. The objective visions have no intrinsic value. Even if they are everlasting they cannot satisfy the person. Uma has Siva always with Her. Both together form *Ardhanariswara*. Yet she wanted to know Siva in His true nature. She made *tapas*. In her *dhyana* she saw a bright light. She thought: "This cannot be Siva for it is within the compass of my vision. I am greater than this light." So she resumed her *tapas*. Thoughts disappeared. Stillness prevailed. She then realised that BE-ing is Siva in His true nature.

Muruganar cited Appar's stanza:- "To remove my darkness and give me light, Thy Grace must work through ME only."

Sri Bhagavan mentioned Manickavachagar's:

"We do *bhajana* and the rest. But we have not seen nor heard of those who had seen Thee." One cannot see God and yet retain individuality. The seer and the seen unite into one Being. There is no cogniser, nor cognition, nor the cognised. All merge into One Supreme Siva only!

4th February, 1938

Talk 451.

Mr. S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri, Reader in Philosophy, Madras University, arrived this night. He had a doubt which he said had been cleared on reading Sarma's commentary on "Knowledge of Self". The doubt was:

How can the world be an imagination or a thought? Thought is a function of the mind. The mind is located in the brain. The brain is within the skull of a human being, who is only an infinitesimal part of the universe. How then can the universe be contained in the cells of the brain?

Sri Bhagavan answered saying: So long as the mind is considered to be an entity of the kind described, the doubt will persist. But what is mind? Let us consider. The world is seen when the man wakes up from sleep. It comes after the 'I-thought'. The head rises up. So the mind has become active. What is the world? It is objects spread out in space. Who comprehends it? The mind. Is not the mind, which comprehends space, itself space (*akasa*)? The space is physical ether (*bhootakasa*). The mind is mental ether (*manakasa*) which is contained in transcendental ether (*chidakasa*). The mind is thus the ether principle, *akasa tattva*. Being the principle of knowledge (*jnana sattva*), it is identified with ether (*akasa*) by metaphysics. Considering it to be ether (*akasa*), there will be no difficulty in reconciling the apparent contradiction in the question. Pure mind (*suddha manas*) is ether (*akasa*). The dynamic and dull (*rajas* and *tamas*) aspects operate as gross objects, etc. Thus the whole universe is only mental.

Again, consider a man who dreams. He goes to sleep in a room with doors closed so that nothing can intrude on him while asleep. He closes his eyes when sleeping so that he does not see any object. Yet when he dreams he sees a whole region in which people live and move about with himself among them. Did this panorama get in through the doors? It was simply unfolded to him by his brain. Is it the sleeper's brain or in the brain of the dream individual? It is in the sleeper's brain. How does it hold this vast country in its tiny cells? This must explain the oft-repeated statement that the whole universe is a mere thought or a series of thoughts.

A Swami asked: I feel toothache. Is it only a thought?

M.: Yes.

D.: Why can I not think that there is no toothache and thus cure myself?

M.: When engrossed in other thoughts one does not feel the toothache. When one sleeps toothache is not felt.

D.: But toothache remains all the same.

M.: Such is the firm conviction of the reality of the world that it is not easily shaken off. The world does not become, for that reason, any more real than the individual himself.

D.: Now there is the Sino-Japanese war. If it is only in imagination, can or will Sri Bhagavan imagine the contrary and put an end to the war?

M.: The Bhagavan of the questioner is as much a thought as the Sino-Japanese war. (Laughter.)

7th February, 1938

Talk 452.

Mr. Dhar, I. C. S., a high Officer and his wife, both young, highly cultured and intelligent, are on a visit here. But they fell ill since they arrived here. She desired to know how meditation could become steady.

M.: What is meditation? It consists in expulsion of thoughts. All the present troubles are due to thoughts and are themselves thoughts. Give up thoughts. That is happiness and also meditation.

D.: How are thoughts given up?

M.: The thoughts are for the thinker. Remain as the Self of the thinker and there is an end of thoughts.

Mr. Dhar asked Sri Bhagavan why Brahma, who is Perfection, creates and puts us to ordeals for regaining Him.

M.: Where is the individual who asks this question? He is in the universe and included in the creation. How does he raise the question when he is bound in the creation? He must go beyond it and see if any question arises then.

8th February, 1938

Talk 453.

Three ladies are on a short visit here, Mrs. Hearst from New Zealand, Mrs. Craig and Mrs. Allison from London.

One asked: What is the best way to work for world peace?

M.: What is world? What is peace, and who is the worker? The world is not in your sleep and forms a projection of your mind in your *jagrat*. It is therefore an idea and nothing else. Peace is absence of disturbance. The disturbance is due to the arising of thoughts in the individual, who is only the ego rising up from Pure Consciousness.

To bring about peace means to be free from thoughts and to abide as Pure Consciousness. If one remains at peace oneself, there is only peace all about.

D.: If it is a question of doing something one considers wrong, and hereby saving someone else from a great wrong, should one do it or refrain?

M.: What is right and wrong? There is no standard by which to judge something to be right and another to be wrong. Opinions differ according to the nature of the individual and according to the surroundings. They are again ideas and nothing more. Do not worry about them. But get rid of thoughts. If you always remain in the right, then right will prevail in the world.

D.: What should one think of when meditating?

M.: What is meditation? It is expulsion of thoughts. You are perturbed by thoughts which rush one after another. Hold on to one thought so that others are expelled. Continuous practice gives the necessary strength of mind to engage in meditation.

Meditation differs according to the degree of advancement of the seeker. If one is fit for it one might directly hold the thinker; and the thinker will automatically sink into his source, namely Pure Consciousness.

If one cannot directly hold the thinker one must meditate on God; and in due course the same individual will have become sufficiently pure to hold the thinker and sink into absolute Being.

One of the ladies was not satisfied with this answer and asked for further elucidation.

Sri Bhagavan then pointed out that to see wrong in another is one's own wrong. The discrimination between right and wrong is the origin of the sin. One's own sin is reflected outside and the individual in ignorance superimposes it on another. The best course for one is to reach the state in which such discrimination does not arise. Do you see wrong or right in your sleep? Did you not exist in sleep? Be asleep even in the wakeful state. Abide as the Self and remain uncontaminated by what goes on around.

Moreover, however much you might advise them, your hearers may not rectify themselves. Be in the right yourself and remain silent. Your silence will have more effect than your words or deeds. That is the development of will-power. Then the world becomes the Kingdom of Heaven, which is within you.

D.: If one is to withdraw oneself, why is there the world?

M.: Where is the world and where does one go withdrawing oneself? Does one fly in an aeroplane beyond space? Is it withdrawal?

The fact is this: the world is only an idea. What do you say: Are you within the world or is the world within you?

D.: I am in the world. I am part of it.

M.: That is the mistake. If the world were to exist apart from you, does it come and tell you that it exists? No, you see it exists. You see it when you are awake and not when asleep. If it exists apart from you, it must tell you so and you must be aware of it even in your sleep.

D.: I became aware of it in my *jagrat*.

M.: Do you become aware of yourself and then of the world? Or do you become aware of the world and then of yourself? Or do you become aware of both simultaneously?

D.: I must say simultaneously.

M.: Were you or were you not, before becoming aware of yourself? Do you admit your continued existence before and when you become aware of the world?

D.: Yes.

M.: If always existing yourself, why are you not aware of the world in sleep if it exists apart from the Self?

D.: I become aware of myself and of the world also.

M.: So you become aware of yourself. Who becomes aware of whom? Are there two selves?

D.: No.

M.: So you see that it is wrong to suppose that awareness has passing phases. The Self is always aware. When the Self identifies itself as the seer it sees objects. The creation of the subject and the object is the creation of the world. Subjects and objects are creations in Pure Consciousness. You see pictures moving on the screen in a cinema show. When you are intent on the pictures you are not aware of the screen. But the pictures cannot be seen without the screen behind. The world stands for the pictures and Consciousness stands for the screen. The Consciousness is pure. It is the same as the Self which is eternal and unchanging. Get rid of the subject and object and Pure Consciousness will alone remain.

D.: But why did Pure Brahman become *Isvara* and manifest the universe if He did not mean it?

M.: Did Brahman or *Isvara* tell you so? You say that Brahman became *Isvara*, and so on. This too you did not say in your sleep. Only in your *jagrat* state you speak of Brahman, *Isvara* and universe. The *jagrat* state is a duality of subject and object - owing to the rise of thoughts. So they are your thought creations.

D.: But the world exists in my sleep even though I am not aware.

M.: What is the proof of its existence?

D.: Others are aware of it.

M.: Do they say so to you when you are in sleep or do you become aware of others who see the world in your sleep?

D.: No, but God is always aware.

M.: Leave God alone. Speak for yourself. You do not know God. He is only what you think of Him. Is he apart from you? He is that Pure Consciousness in which all ideas are formed. You are that Consciousness.

10th February, 1938

Talk 454.

Mrs. Dhar: Sri Bhagavan advises practice of enquiry even when one is engaged in external activities. The finality of such enquiry is the realisation of the Self and consequently breath must stop. If breath should stop, how will work go on or, in other words, how will breath stop when one is working?

M.: There is confusion between the means and the end (*i.e.*, *sadhana* and *sadhya*). Who is the enquirer? The aspirant and not the *siddha*. Enquiry signifies that the enquirer considers himself separate from enquiry.

So long as this duality lasts the enquiry must be continued, *i.e.*, until the individuality disappears and the Self is realised to be only the eternal Be-ing (including enquiry and enquirer).

The Truth is that Self is constant and unintermittent Awareness. The object of enquiry is to find the true nature of the Self as Awareness. Let one practise enquiry so long as separateness is perceived.

If once realisation arises there is no further need for enquiry. The question will also not arise. Can awareness ever think of questioning who is aware? Awareness remains pure and simple.

The enquirer is aware of his own individuality. Enquiry does not stand in the way of his individual awareness; nor does external work interfere with such awareness. If work, seemingly external, does not obstruct the individual awareness, will the work, realised to be not separate from the Self, obstruct the uninterrupted Awareness of the Self, which is One without a second and which is not an individual separate from work?

Talk 455.

Mrs. Dhar: I form part of the creation and so remain dependent. I cannot solve the riddle until I become independent. Yet I ask Sri Bhagavan, should He not answer the question for me?

M.: Yes. It is Bhagavan that says, "Become independent and solve the riddle yourself. It is for you to do it." Again: where are you now that you ask this question? Are you in the world, or is the world within

you? You must admit that the world is not perceived in your sleep although you cannot deny your existence then. The world appears when you wake up. So where is it? Clearly the world is your thought. Thoughts are your projections. The 'I' is first created and then the world. The world is created by the 'I' which in its turn rises up from the Self. The riddle of the creation of the world is thus solved if you solve the creation of the 'I'. So I say, find your Self.

Again, does the world come and ask you "Why do 'I' exist? How was 'I' created?" It is you who ask the question. The questioner must establish the relationship between the world and himself. He must admit that the world is his own imagination. Who imagines it? Let him again find the 'I' and then the Self.

Moreover, all the scientific and theological explanations do not harmonise. The diversities in such theories clearly show the uselessness of seeking such explanations. Such explanations are purely mental or intellectual and nothing more. Still, all of them are true according to the standpoint of the individual. There is no creation in the state of realisation. When one sees the world, one does not see oneself. When one sees the Self, the world is not seen. So see the Self and realise that there has been no creation.

The lady being laid up is unable to go to the hall and so feels unhappy that, though near, she cannot go into the hall. This was mentioned to Sri Bhagavan. He said, "Well, thinking like this keeps her always in the Presence. This is better than remaining in the hall and thinking of something else."

11th February, 1938

Talk 456.

CONTACT WITH SAINTS

A DANGER:

"Seek the company of saints by all means; but do not remain indefinitely with them. The adage, familiarity breeds contempt, applies even to their case," writes Swami Ramdas in the course of an article in *The Vision*.

"Spiritual growth is, no doubt, largely dependent on suitable association. Company of saints is, therefore, held to be essential for a

seeker after truth. But it must not be understood by the company of saints to mean that the seeker should permanently stick on to them.

"He may, for a brief period, remain in their contact and, thereby drawing inspiration and guidance, get himself thoroughly awakened to the consciousness of the indwelling Reality. It would be well for him to depart from them before the light and inspiration that he has received diminishes or disappears.

MAY TURN SCOFFERS:

"There are many cases known to the writer and many others of which he has heard and read, in which such continued dwelling in the company of saints has not only cooled down the ardour and aspiration of the seekers but also turned them into scoffers and sceptics. The fall of a *sadhak* from faith, purity and aspiration does him incalculable harm.

"A young plant growing beneath the shade of a full-grown giant tree does not develop strength and stature. Its growth will be dwarfed, shrivelled and diseased. Whereas if the same plant were put into the open ground directly exposed to the storms, heat, cold, and other rigours of changing weather, it is bound to grow into a mighty tree drawing sustenance both from above and below.

STIFLED GROWTH:

"This analogy of the plant aptly illustrates the stunted life of a seeker who is attached merely to the outward personality of a saint and spends all his days in close association with him. Here the initiative for a free expression of his unique spiritual possibilities is stifled. He fails to cultivate the fundamental qualities for his advancement - fearlessness, self-dependence and endurance. The one great Guide that should control his mind, speech and body should be the almighty Spirit within him. To surrender to this Spirit and become its very embodiment is his goal. To stand on his own legs, struggle and grow by his own strength and experience and lastly to hand himself over to God by his own endeavour brings true liberation and peace.

"From what has been said above, it must not be construed that reflection is cast upon the greatness and efficacy of the company of God-realised

souls. Such a contact is the most effective means for a rapid spiritual evolution of the soul. In fact, the grace of saints is an invaluable aid for *sadhana* and without it the condition of the aspirant is like a bird beating in vain its wings against the bars of the cage for freedom. Saints are the saviours and liberators.

The Hindu conception of a saint is that he is the very embodiment of God himself. So honour him, derive the rare benefit of his society, serve him with a frank and pure heart, listen intently to his words of advice, and strive to act up to them and achieve the fullest knowledge of the Truth you are in quest of.

But seek not to remain attached to his person and lose the spiritual gifts you obtained from him by first contacts."

This cutting was read out to Sri Bhagavan. He listened and remained silent. He was requested to say if contact with saints could be a danger. Sri Bhagavan then quoted a Tamil stanza which says that contact with Guru should be kept up till *videhamukti* (being disembodied).

Again he asked where is the *Satpurusha*? He is within. Then he quoted another stanza meaning:

"O Master, Who has been within me in all my past incarnations and Who manifested as a human being, only to speak the language understood by me and lead me."

12th February, 1938

Talk 457.

Mrs. Rosita Forbes was said to be in India. Sri Bhagavan said: The explorers seek happiness in finding curiosities, discovering new lands and undergoing risks in adventures. They are thrilling. But where is pleasure found? Only within. Pleasure is not to be sought in the external world.

13th February, 1938

Talk 458.

Sri Bhagavan said that non-dual idea is advised, but not *advaita* in action. How will one learn *advaita*, if one does not find a master and receive instructions? Is there not duality then? That is the meaning.

14th February, 1938

Talk 459.

Quoting Alexander Selkirk's soliloquy, Sri Bhagavan said: The happiness of solitude is not found in retreats. It may be had even in busy centres. Happiness is not to be sought in solitude or in busy centres. It is in the Self.

17th February, 1938

Talk 460.

Observing the moon before the rising sun, Sri Bhagavan remarked:

See the moon and also the cloud in the sky. There is no difference in their brilliance. The moon looks only like a speck of cloud. The *jnani's* mind is like this moon before sunlight. It is there but not shining of itself.

18th February, 1938

Talk 461.

As Sri Bhagavan was going through the letters which arrived this day, He read out one of them as follows:

A Brahmin boy working in a household went to sleep as usual. In his sleep he cried out. When he woke up he said that he felt his *prana* going out of the body through the mouth and nostrils. So he cried. Soon after he found himself dead and the soul taken to *Vaikunta* where God Vishnu was surrounded by other gods and devotees with prominent Vaishnavite marks on their foreheads. Vishnu said, "This man should be brought here at 2 o'clock tomorrow. Why has he been brought here now? "The boy then woke up and related his experience. The next day at 2 o'clock he passed away.

19th February, 1938

Talk 462.

Mrs. Dhar had been anxious to ask some questions and get help from Sri Bhagavan. She approached Him with great hesitation and gently related her troubles: My attempts at concentration are frustrated by sudden palpitations of the heart and accompanying hard, short and quick breaths. Then my thoughts also rush out and the mind becomes uncontrollable. Under healthy conditions I am more successful and my breath comes to a standstill with deep concentration. I had long been anxious to get the

benefit of Sri Bhagavan's proximity for the successful culmination of my meditation and so came here after considerable effort. I fell ill here. I could not meditate and so I felt depressed. I made a determined effort to concentrate my mind even though I was troubled by short and quick breaths. Though partly successful it does not satisfy me. The time for my leaving the place is drawing near. I feel more and more depressed as I contemplate leaving the place. Here I find people obtaining peace by meditation in the hall; whereas I am not blessed with such peace. This itself has a depressing effect on me.

M.: This thought, 'I am not able to concentrate,' is itself an obstacle. Why should the thought arise?

D.: Can one remain without thoughts rising all the 24 hours of the day? Should I remain without meditation?

M.: What is 'hours' again? It is a concept. Each question of yours is prompted by a thought.

Your nature is Peace and Happiness. Thoughts are the obstacles to realisation. One's meditation or concentration is meant to get rid of obstacles and not to gain the Self. Does anyone remain apart from the Self? No! The true nature of the Self is declared to be Peace. If the same peace is not found, the non-finding is only a thought which is alien to the Self. One practises meditation only to get rid of these alien fancies. So, then, a thought must be quelled as soon as it rises. Whenever a thought arises, do not be carried away by it. You become aware of the body when you forget the Self. But can you forget the Self? Being the Self how can you forget it? There must be two selves for one to forget the other. It is absurd. So the Self is not depressed; it is not imperfect: it is ever happy. The contrary feeling is a mere thought which has actually no stamina in it. Be rid of thoughts. Why should one attempt meditation? Being the Self one remains always realised, only be free from thoughts.

You think that your health does not permit your meditation. This depression must be traced to its origin. The origin is the wrong identification of the body with the Self. The disease is not of the Self. It is of the body. But the body does not come and tell you that it is possessed by the disease. It is you who say it. Why? Because you have wrongly identified yourself with the body.

The body itself is a thought. Be as you really are. There is no reason to be depressed.

The lady was called away and she retired. The question was however pursued as follows:

D.: Sri Bhagavan's answers do not permit us to put further questions, not because our minds are peaceful but we are unable to argue the point. Our discontent is not at an end. For the physical ailments to go the mental ailments should go. Both go when thoughts go. Thoughts do not go without effort. Effort is not possible with the present weakness of mind. The mind requires grace to gain strength. Grace must manifest only after surrender. So all questions, wittingly or unwittingly, amount to asking for Sri Bhagavan's Grace.

M.: Smiled and said, "Yes."

D.: Surrender is said to be *bhakti*. But Sri Bhagavan is known to favour enquiry for the Self. There is thus confusion in the hearer.

M.: Surrender can take effect only when done with full knowledge. Such knowledge comes after enquiry. It ends in surrender.

D.: The knowledge of the Supreme Being is after transcending the individual self. This is *jnana*. Where is the need for surrender?

M.: Quite so. There is no difference between *jnana* and surrender. (Smile).

D.: How is the questioner satisfied then? The only alternative left is association with the wise or devotion to God (*satsanga* or *Isvara bhakti*).

M.: Smiled and said, "Yes."

21st February, 1938

Talk 463.

In the course of the conversation Sri Bhagavan spoke appreciatingly of the services of Palanisami and Ayyasami - his former attendants.

He said that they raised in the garden two crude platforms which were occupied by Himself and Palanisami; they were most comfortable. They were made of straw and bamboo mats and were even more comfortable than the sofa here. Palanisami used to pass through the footpath between rows of prickly pear to bring begged food every night from Kizhnathoor. Though Sri Bhagavan protested Palanisami persisted in doing so. He

was free from greed or attachment of any kind. He had earned some money by service in the Straits Settlements and deposited his small savings with someone in the town from whom he used to draw in his emergencies. He was offered a comfortable living in his native village which he refused and continued to live with Sri Bhagavan till the end.

Ayyasami had worked under a European in South Africa and was clean, active and capable. He could manage even ten asramams at a time. He was also free from any attachment or greed. He was loyal to Palanisami, even fond of him. He was more capable than the other.

Annamalai first visited Maharshi in Virupaksha cave; he later went to Kovilur and studied some Tamil scriptures. He returned to Skandasramam. He died in January, 1922 in his 29th year. In the meantime he had composed 36 stanzas in Tamil full of significance and fervour.

Sri Bhagavan had them read out and briefly explained their meaning.

5th March, 1938

Talk 464.

A passage from *Arunachala Mahatmya* (the Glory of Arunachala) was read out. It related to Pangunni (a lame sage) who had his legs made whole by the grace of Sri Arunachala. Sri Bhagavan then related the story of a man whom Sri Maharshi had seen when He was in Gurumurtham. The man was one Kuppu Iyer. His legs were useless and he could not walk. He was once on his way to Vettavalam, moving on his buttocks. An old man suddenly appeared before him and said "Get up and walk. Why do you move on your buttocks?" Kuppu Iyer was excited and beside himself. Involuntarily he rose up and walked freely. After going a short distance, he looked behind to see the stranger who made him walk. But he could not find anyone. He narrated the incident to all those who were surprised to see him walk. Any old man in the town can bear witness to Kuppu Iyer regaining the use of his legs.

Again a girl from the Girl's School was decoyed and was being robbed of her jewels. Suddenly an old man appeared on the scene, rescued the girl, escorted her to her home and then disappeared.

Often such mysterious happenings occur in Tiruvannamalai.

6th March, 1938

Talk 465.

Sri Bhagavan explained to a retired Judge of the High Court some points in the *Upadesa Saram* as follows:-

(1) Meditation should remain unbroken as a current. If unbroken it is called *samadhi or Kundalini sakti*.

(2) The mind may be latent and merge in the Self; it must necessarily rise up again; after it rises up one finds oneself only as ever before. For in this state the mental predispositions are present there in latent form to remanifest under favourable conditions.

(3) Again the mind activities can be completely destroyed. This differs from the former mind, for here the attachment is lost, never to reappear. Even though the man sees the world after he has been in the *samadhi* state, the world will be taken only at its worth, that is to say it is the phenomenon of the One Reality. The True Being can be realised only in *samadhi*; what was then is also now. Otherwise it cannot be Reality or Ever-present Being. What was in *samadhi* is here and now too. Hold it and it is your natural condition of Being. *Samadhi* practice must lead to it. Otherwise how can *nirvikalpa samadhi* be of any use in which a man remains as a log of wood? He must necessarily rise up from it sometime or other and face the world. But in *sahaja samadhi* he remains unaffected by the world.

So many pictures pass over the cinema screen: fire burns away everything; water drenches all; but the screen remains unaffected. The scenes are only phenomena which pass away leaving the screen as it was. Similarly the world phenomena simply pass on before the *Jnani*, leaving him unaffected.

You may say that people find pain or pleasure in worldly phenomena. It is owing to superimposition. This must not happen. With this end in view practice is made.

Practice lies in one of the two courses: devotion or knowledge. Even these are not the goals. *Samadhi* must be gained; it must be continuously practised until *sahaja samadhi* results. Then there remains nothing more to do.

Talk 466.

Mr. Vaidyalingam, an employee of the National Bank: By meditation manifestation disappears and then *ananda* results. It is short-lived. How is it made ever abiding?

M.: By scorching the predispositions.

D.: Is not the Self the witness only (*sakshimatra*)?

M.: 'Witness' is applicable when there is an object to be seen. Then it is duality. The Truth lies beyond both. In the mantra, *sakshi cheta kevalo nirgunascha*, the word *sakshi* must be understood as *sannidhi* (presence), without which there could be nothing. See how the sun is necessary for daily activities. He does not however form part of the world actions; yet they cannot take place without the sun. He is the witness of the activities. So it is with the Self.

7th March, 1938

Talk 467.

Yogi Ramiah: All actions take place owing to *Sakti*. How far does *Sakti* go? Can she effect anything without one's own effort?

M.: The answer to the question depends on what the *Purusha* is understood to be. Is he the ego or the Self?

D.: Purusha is *svarupa*.

M.: But he cannot make any *prayatna* (effort).

D.: Jiva is the one who makes the *prayatna*.

M.: So long as egoity lasts *prayatna* is necessary. When egoity ceases to be, actions become spontaneous. The ego acts in the presence of the Self. He cannot exist without the Self.

The Self makes the universe what it is by His *Sakti*, and yet He does not Himself act. Sri Krishna says in the *Bhagavad Gita*, "I am not the doer and yet actions go on". It is clear from the *Mahabharata* that very wonderful actions were effected by Him. Yet He says that He is not the doer. It is like the sun and the world actions.

D.: He is without *abhimana* (attachment) whereas the *jiva* is with *abhimana*.

M.: Yes. Being attached, he acts and also reaps the fruits. If the fruits are according to his desire he is happy; otherwise he is miserable. Happiness and misery are due to his attachment. If actions were to take place without attachment there would be no expectation of fruit.

D.: Can actions take place spontaneously without individual effort? Should we not cook our food in order to eat it later?

M.: Atman acts through the ego. All actions are due to efforts only. A sleeping child is fed by its mother. The child eats food without being wide awake and then denies having taken food in sleep. However the mother knows what happened. Similarly the *jnani* acts unawares. Others see him act, but he does not know it himself. Owing to fear of Him wind blows, etc. That is the order of things. He ordains everything and the universe acts accordingly, yet He does not know. Therefore He is called the great Doer. Every embodied being (*ahankari*) is bound by *niyama*. Even Brahma cannot transgress it.

[This devotee later explained the significance of his question. He hears Sri Bhagavan say that the world goes on and the individual needs are met by Divine Will. But he finds that Sri Bhagavan wakes up the Asramites at about 4 a.m. to cut vegetables for the day's curry. He wanted to have the doubt cleared for his own benefit and the question was not meant for discussion].

10th March, 1938

Talk 468.

As Sri Bhagavan was going out, the following Vedic chant was heard from a hut:

Antaraditya manasa jvalantam - Brahmana vindat. Sri Bhagavan drew our attention to it and remarked:-

In the *Taittriya Upanishad* also, He is said to be made of gold, etc. What does it all mean? Although the sun and the other luminaries are said to be self luminous, yet they do not shine forth of themselves but they shine by the light of the Supreme Being. (*na tatra suryo....vibhati*). So long as they are said to be separate from Brahman their 'Self-luminosity' is the luminosity of Brahman. All these *mantras* mentioning the sun, etc., speak only of Brahman.

Talk 469.

Yogi Ramiah asked: A master is approached by an aspirant for enlightenment. The master says that Brahman has no qualities, nor stain, nor movement, etc. Does he not then speak as an individual? How can the aspirant's ignorance be wiped off unless the master speaks thus? Do the words of the master as an individual amount to Truth?

M.: To whom should the master speak? Whom does he instruct? Does he see anyone different from the Self?

D.: But the disciple is asking the master for elucidation.

M.: True, but does the master see him as different? The ignorance of the disciple lies in not knowing that all are Self-realised. Can anyone exist apart from the Self? The master simply points out that the ignorance lies there and therefore does not stand apart as an individual.

What is Realisation? Is it to see God with four hands, bearing conch, wheel, club, etc.? Even if God should appear in that form, how is the disciple's ignorance wiped out? The truth must be eternal realisation. The direct perception is ever-present Experience. God Himself is known as directly perceived. It does not mean that He appears before the devotee as said above. Unless the Realisation be eternal it cannot serve any useful purpose. Can the appearance with four hands be eternal realisation? It is phenomenal and illusory. There must be a seer. The seer alone is real and eternal.

Let God appear as the light of a million suns: Is it *pratyaksha*?

To see it, the eyes, the mind, etc. are necessary. It is indirect knowledge, whereas the seer is direct experience. The seer alone is *pratyaksha*. All other perceptions are only secondary knowledge. The present super-imposition of the body as 'I' is so deep-rooted, that the vision before the eyes is considered *pratyaksha* but not the seer himself. No one wants realisation because there is no one who is not realised. Can anyone say that he is not already realised or that he is apart from the Self? No. Evidently all are realised. What makes him unhappy is the desire to exercise extraordinary powers. He knows that he cannot do so. Therefore he wants God to appear before him, confer all His powers on the devotee, and keep Himself in the background. In short, God should abdicate His powers in favour of the man.

D.: It is all right for *mahatmas* like Sri Bhagavan to speak out so plainly. Because the Truth does not swerve from you, you consider it easy for all others. Nevertheless, the common folk have a real difficulty.

M.: Then does anyone say that he is not the Self?

D.: I meant to say that no one else has the courage to put things straight like Maharshi.

M.: Where is the courage in saying things as they are?

Talk 470.

As a European Countess was leaving for Europe tonight she requested him to bless her and her family.

M.: You do not go anywhere away from the Presence as you imagine. The Presence is everywhere. The body moves from place to place; yet it does not leave the one Presence. So no one can be out of sight of the Supreme Presence. Since you identify one body with Sri Bhagavan and another body with yourself, you find two separate entities and speak of going away from here. Wherever you may be, you cannot leave ME.

To illustrate it: The pictures move on the screen in a cinema show; but does the screen itself move? No. The Presence is the screen: you, I, and others are the pictures. The individuals may move but not the Self.

Talk 471.

D.: The *avatars* are said to be more glorious than the self-realised *jnanis*. *Maya* does not affect them from birth; divine powers are manifest; new religions are started; and so on.

M.: (1) "*Jnani tvatmaiva me matam*."

(2) "*Sarvam khalvidam brahma*."

How is an *avatar* different from a *jnani*; or how can there be an *avatar* as distinct from the universe?

D.: The eye (*chakshu*) is said to be the repository (*ayatana*) of all forms; so the ear (*srotra*) is of all sounds, etc. The one *Chaitanya* operates as all; no miracles are possible without the aid of the

senses (*indriyas*). How can there be miracles at all? If they are said to surpass human understanding so are the creations in dreams. Where then is the miracle?

The distinction between *Avataras* and *Jnanis* is absurd.

"Knower of Brahman becomes Brahman only" is otherwise contradicted.

M.: Quite so.

15th March, 1938

Talk 472.

A large group of Punjabis arrived here in a pilgrim special. They came to the Ramanasramam at about 8-45 a.m. and sat quiet for a long time. At about 9-20 one of them said: "Your reputation has spread in the Punjab. We have travelled a long distance to have your *darsan*. Kindly tell us something by way of instruction." There was no oral reply. Sri Bhagavan smiled and gazed on. After some time the visitor asked: "Which is the best - the yoga, the *bhakti* or the *jnana* path?" Still Sri Bhagavan smiled and gazed as before.

Sri Bhagavan left the hall for a few minutes. The visitors began to disperse. Still a sprinkling of them continued to sit in the hall. A long standing disciple told the visitor that Sri Bhagavan had replied to his questions by His Silence which was even more eloquent than words.

After Sri Bhagavan returned, the visitor began to speak a little. In the course of his speech, he asked:

D.: It is all right for those who believe in God. Others ask - Is there a God?

M.: Are you there?

D.: Quite so. That is the question. I see before my eyes a battalion of sepoys passing. Therefore I am. The world must have been created by God. How shall I see the Creator?

M.: See yourself, who sees these, and the problem is solved.

D.: Is it to sit silent or to read sacred books or to concentrate the mind? *Bhakti* helps concentration. People fall at the feet of the *bhakta*. If it does not happen he feels disappointed and his *bhakti* fades.

M.: The longing for happiness never fades. That is *bhakti*.

D.: How shall I get it quicker? Suppose I concentrate two hours today. If I try to lengthen the period the next day, I fall asleep because I get tired of the job.

M.: You do not get tired in sleep. The same person is now present here. Why should you be tired now? Because your mind is restless and wanders, it gets tired, and not you.

D.: I am a business man. How shall I get on with business and get peace of mind also?

M.: This is also a thought. Give up this thought also and remain as your true Self.

D.: It is said: Do your duty without any expectation of results. How shall I get that frame of mind?

M.: You need not aspire for or get any new state. Get rid of your present thoughts, that is all.

D.: How shall I get the *bhakti* necessary for it?

M.: It is *bhakti* to get rid of thoughts which are only alien to you (*i.e*. the Self).

D.: What is thought-force, mesmerism, etc.? There was a doctor in Paris called Dr. Coue. He was illiterate, but yet was able to cure many incurable diseases by will-force. He used to say: Generate power to cure yourself. The power is within you.

M.: It is through the same will-power that the seat of all diseases, the body, has risen.

D.: So it is said thoughts manifest as objects.

M.: This thought must be for *mukti* (liberation).

D.: God must enable us to get rid of the other thoughts.

M.: This is again a thought. Let that which has incarnated raise the question. You are not that because you are free from thoughts.

Another visitor from Rawalpindi asked: The Atman is formless. How shall I concentrate on it?

M.: Leave alone the Atman which you say is formless or intangible. Mind is tangible to you. Hold the mind and it will do.

D.: Mind itself is very subtle and is also the same as the Atman. How shall we know the nature of the mind? You have said that all supports are useless. What should be our stand then?

M.: Where does your mind stand?

D.: Where does it stand?

M.: Ask the mind itself.

D.: I ask you now. Should we concentrate on mind then?

M.: Um!

D.: But what is the nature of the mind? It is formless. The problem is perplexing.

M.: Why are you perplexed?

D.: The *sastras* want us to concentrate and I cannot do so.

M.: Through what *sastras* have we known our existence?

D.: It is a matter of experience. But I want to concentrate.

M.: Be free from thoughts. Do not hold on to anything. They do not hold you. Be yourself.

D.: I do not yet understand as to where I take my stand and concentrate. Can I meditate on my mind?

M.: Whose mind?

D.: My own mind?

M.: Who are you? The question now resolves itself all right.

(All retired for lunch. The visitor returned at 2-30 p.m. and pursued the same question.)

He said: Maharshi advises the seeker to get rid of thoughts. On what should I concentrate the mind after all the thoughts are expelled? I do not see where I stand then and on what I should concentrate.

M.: For whom is the concentration?

D.: For the mind.

M.: Then concentrate the mind.

D.: On what?

M.: Answer the question yourself. What is the mind? Why should you concentrate?

D.: I do not know what the mind is. I ask Maharshi.

M.: Maharshi does not seek to know the mind. The questioner must question the mind itself as to what it is.

D.: Maharshi advises that the mind should be divested of thoughts.

M.: This is itself a thought.

D.: When all thoughts disappear what remains over?

M.: Is the mind different from thoughts?

D.: No. The mind is made up of thoughts. My point is this: When all thoughts are got rid of, how shall I concentrate the mind?

M.: Is not this also a thought?

D.: Yes, but I am advised to concentrate.

M.: Why should you concentrate? Why should you not allow your thoughts free play?

D.: The *sastras* say that the thoughts, thus playing free, lead us astray, that is, to unreal and changeful things.

M.: So then, you want not to be led to unreal and changeful things. Your thoughts are unreal and changeful. You want to hold the Reality. That is exactly what I say. The thoughts are unreal. Get rid of them.

D.: I understand now. Yet there is a doubt. "Not a trice can you remain inactive." How shall I be able to rid myself of thoughts?

M.: The same *Gita* says: "Although all actions take place, I am not the doer." It is like the sun towards the world activities. The Self always remains actionless, whereas thoughts arise and subside. The Self is Perfection; it is immutable; the mind is limited and changeful. You need only to cast off your limitations. Your perfection thus stands revealed.

D.: Grace is necessary for it.

M.: Grace is ever present. All that is necessary is that you surrender to It.

D.: I surrender and pray that even if I go wrong I may be forcibly drawn to it.

M.: Is this surrender? Surrender to be complete must be unquestioning.

D.: Yes, I surrender. You say I must dive into the ocean of the Self like a pearl-diver into the sea.

M.: Because you are now thinking that you are out of the ocean of Consciousness.

D.: I practise *pranayama*. It generates heat in the body. What should I do?

M.: The heat will pass away when the mind gains calm

D.: That is true but most difficult.

M.: This is again a thought which is an obstacle.

Talk 473.

Someone remarked: It is said that they get *mukti* unasked who live or die within a radius of 30 miles round Arunachala. It is also admitted that only by *jnana* is liberation obtained. The *purana* also remarks that *Vedanta Vijnana* is difficult to get. So *mukti* is difficult. But life or death round about the Hill bestows *mukti* so easily. How can it be?

M.: Siva says, "By My command." Those who live here need no initiation, *diksha*, etc., but get *mukti*.. Such is the command of Siva.

D.: The *purana* also says that those who are born here are Siva's group of followers, such as ghosts, spirits, disembodied beings, etc.

M.: So it is said of other *kshetras* as well, *e.g.*, Tiruvarur, Chidambaram.

D.: How does mere life or death here confer *mukti*? It is difficult to understand.

M.: Darsanad Abhrasadasi jananat Kamalalaye, Kasyantu maranam muktih smaranad Arunachale.

"To see Chidambaram, to be born in Tiruvarur, to die in Benares, or merely to think of Arunachala, is to be assured of Liberation."

Jananat Kamalalaye means "by being born in *Kamalalaya*". What is it? It is the Heart.

Similarly, *Abhrasadasi* - Seat of Consciousness. Again, *Kasi* is the Light of Realisation. Remembering Arunachala completes the verse. It must also be understood in the same sense.

D.: So *bhakti* is necessary.

M.: Everything depends on the outlook. One sees that all born in Tiruvarur, or visiting Chidambaram, or dying in Banares, or contemplating Arunachala, are *muktas*.

D.: I think of Arunachala, but still I am not a *mukta*.

M.: Change of outlook is all that is necessary. See what such a change did for Arjuna. He had the vision, of the Cosmic Self. Sri Krishna says: "Gods and saints are eager to see my Cosmic Form. I have not fulfilled their desire. Yet I endow divine sight by which you can see that Form." Well, having said so, does He show what He is? No. He asks Arjuna to see in Him all that he desires to see. If that were His real form it must be changeless and known for what it is worth. Instead, Arjuna is commanded to see whatever he desires. So where is the Cosmic Form? It must be in Arjuna.

Furthermore, Arjuna finds Gods and saints in that form and they are praising the Lord. If the form be withheld from the Gods and saints as said by Krishna, who are they of Arjuna's vision?

D.: They must be in his imagination.

M.: They are there because of Arjuna's outlook.

D.: Then the outlook must be changed by God's Grace.

M.: Yes. That happens to *bhaktas*.

D.: A man dreams of a tiger, takes fright and wakes up. The dream-tiger appears to the dream ego who is also frightened. When he wakes up how is it that that ego disappears, and the man wakes up as the waking ego?

M.: That establishes that the ego is the same. Dream, wakefulness and sleep are passing phases for the same ego.

D.: It is so difficult to spot the mind. The same difficulty is shared by all.

M.: You can never find the mind through mind. Pass beyond it in order to find it non-existent.

D.: Then one must directly go to seek the ego. Is it so?

M.: That's it.

Mind, ego, intellect are all different names for one single inner organ (*antahkarana*). The mind is only the aggregate of thoughts. Thoughts cannot exist but for the ego. So all thoughts are pervaded by ego (*aham*). Seek wherefrom the 'I' rises and the other thoughts will disappear.

D.: What remains over cannot be 'I', but Pure Consciousness.

M.: Quite so. You start seeking happiness. On analysis you find that misery is caused by thoughts. They are called the mind. While trying to control the mind you seek the 'I' and get fixed in Being-Knowledge-Bliss.

Another devotee: What then is the mind?

M.: Mind is consciousness which has put on limitations. You are originally unlimited and perfect. Later you take on limitations and become the mind.

D.: It is *avarana* (veiling) then. How does this happen?

M.: To whom is the *avarana*? It is the same as *avidya* (ignorance), ego or the mind.

D.: Avarana means obscuration. Who is obscured? How does it arise?

M.: The limitation is itself obscuration. No questions will arise if limitations are transcended.

16th March, 1938

Talk 474.

There was some reference to the heart. Sri Bhagavan said: The yoga *sastras* speak of 72,000 *nadis*, of 101 *nadis*, etc. A reconciliation is effected by others that 101 are the main *nadis*, which subdivide into 72,*000*. These *nadis* are supposed by some to spread out from the brain, by others from the Heart and by some others from the coccyx. They speak of a *paranadi* which is said to rise up from the coccyx through the *Sushumna* to the brain and descends to the heart. Others say that the *Sushumna* ends in *Para*.

A few advise seeking realisation in the head (*Sahasrara*); a few between the eyebrows; a few in the heart; others in the solar plexus. If realisation amounts to gaining the *Paranadi*, one might enter it from the Heart. But the yogi is engaged in cleansing the *nadis*; then *Kundalini* is awakened which is said to rise up from the coccyx to the head. The yogi is later advised to come down to the Heart as the final step.

The Vedas say: "The Heart is like a lotus turned down, or a plantain bud."

“There is a bright spot atom-like, like the end of a grain of paddy.”

“That spot is like a flame and in its centre, transcendental Brahman is seated.” Which is that Heart? Is it the heart of the physiologists? If so, the physiologists know best.

The Heart of the Upanishads is construed as *Hridayam*, meaning: This (is) the centre. That is, it is where the mind rises and subsides. That is the seat of Realisation. When I say that it is the Self the people imagine that it is within the body. When I ask where the Self remains in one’s sleep they seem to think that it is within the body, but unaware of the body and its surroundings like a man confined in a dark room. To such people it is necessary to say that the seat of Realisation is somewhere within the body. The name of the centre is the Heart; but it is confounded with the heart organ.

When a man dreams, he creates himself (*i.e.*, the *ahamkar*, the seer) and the surroundings. All of them are later withdrawn into himself. The one became many, along with the seer. Similarly also, the one becomes many in the waking state. The objective world is really subjective. An astronomer discovers a new star at immeasurable distance and announces that its light takes thousands of light years to reach the earth. Well, where is the star in fact? Is it not in the observer? But people wonder how a huge globe, larger than the Sun, at such a distance can be contained in the brain-cells of a man. The space, the magnitudes and the paradox are all in the mind only. How do they exist there? Inasmuch as you become aware of them, you must admit a light which illumines them. These thoughts are absent in sleep but rise up on waking. So this light is transient, having an origin and an end. The consciousness of ‘I’ is permanent and continuous. So this cannot be the aforesaid light. It is different but has no independent existence. Therefore it must be *abhasa* (reflected light). The light in the brain is thus reflected knowledge (*abhasa samvit*) or reflected being (*abhasa sat*). The true knowledge (*Samvit*) or Being (*Sat*) is in the centre called Heart (*Hridaya*). When one wakes up from sleep it is reflected in the head, and so the head is no longer lying prone but rises up. From there the consciousness spreads all over the body and so the superimposed ‘I’ functions as the wakeful entity.

The pure light in the brain is *suddha manas* (the pure mind) which later becomes contaminated and is *malina manas*, the one ordinarily found.

All these are however contained in the Self. The body and its counterparts are in the Self. The Self is not confined in the body, as is commonly supposed.

16th March, 1938

Talk 475.

Sri Maharshi read out a news item from a paper to the following effect: A forest guard armed with a rifle was going in the jungle and noticed two bright spots in a thicket. On closer approach to find out what they were, he was face to face with a huge tiger within a few yards of him. He threw down his gun and assumed a prayerful attitude towards the jungle king. The tiger stood up and slowly moved away without injuring him.

21st March, 1938

Talk 476.

Dr. Stanley Jones, a Christian missionary, visited Maharshi. He writes books and delivers lectures. He has two Asramams under his control in North India. He was accompanied by another gentleman and two ladies. He is at present writing a book *On the Indian Road* and wants to meet the spiritually great men in India so that he may collect material for the book. He desired to know how the Indian sages have proceeded and what they have found as their experience in divinity. So he asked questions. (This is only a short sketch of his interview).

D.: What is your quest? What is the goal? How far have you progressed?

M.: The goal is the same for all. But tell me why you should be in search of a goal? Why are you not content with the present condition?

D.: Is there then no goal?

M.: Not so. What makes you seek a goal? It is a counter-question to be answered by you.

D.: I have my own ideas of these subjects. I want to know what Maharshi has to say.

M.: Maharshi has no doubts to be cleared.

D.: Well, I consider the goal to be the realisation by the lower mind of the higher mind so that the Kingdom of Heaven might endure here on earth. The lower mind is incomplete and it must be made perfect by realisation of the higher mind.

M.: So then you admit a lower mind which is incomplete and which seeks realisation of the higher so that it may become perfect. Is that lower mind apart from the higher mind? Is it independent of the other?

D.: The Kingdom of Heaven was brought down on Earth by Jesus Christ. I consider Him to be the Kingdom personified. I want everyone to realise the same. He said: "I am hungry with other men's hunger;" and so on. Mutual partnership in pleasure and pain is the Kingdom of Heaven. If that Kingdom is universalised everyone will feel at one with the rest.

M.: You speak of the differences between the lower and the higher minds, pleasures and pains. What becomes of these differences in your sleep?

D.: But I want to be wide awake.

M.: Is this your wide awakened state? It is not. It is only a dream in your long sleep. All are in sleep, dreaming of the world and things and actions.

D.: This is all Vedantic, I have no use for it. The existing differences are not imaginary. They are positive. However, what is that real waking? Can Maharshi tell us what he has found it to be?

M.: Real waking lies beyond the three states of waking, dream and sleep.

D.: I am really awake and know that I am not in sleep.

M.: Real waking lies beyond the plane of differences.

D.: What is the state of the world then?

M.: Does the world come and tell you "I exist"?

D.: No. But the people in the world tell me that the world needs spiritual, social and moral regeneration.

M.: You see the world and the people in it. They are your thoughts. Can the world be apart from you?

D.: I enter into it with love.

M.: Before entering thus do you stand aloof?

D.: I am identified with it and yet remaining apart. Now I came here to ask Maharshi and hear him. Why does he ask me questions?

M.: Maharshi has replied. His reply amounts to this: Real waking does not involve differences.

D.: Can such realisation be universalised?

M.: Where are differences there? There are no individuals in it.

D.: Have you reached the goal?

M.: The goal cannot be anything apart from the Self nor can it be something to be gained afresh. If that were so, such goal cannot be abiding and permanent. What appears anew will also disappear. The goal must be eternal and within. Find it within yourself.

D.: I want to know your experience.

M.: Maharshi does not seek enlightenment. The question is of no use to the questioner. Whether I have realised or not, how does it affect the questioner?

D.: Not so. Each one's experience has a human value in it and can be shared by others.

M.: The problem must be solved by the questioner himself. The question is best directed to oneself.

D.: I know the answer to the question.

M.: Let us have it.

D.: I was shown the Kingdom of Heaven twenty years ago. It was by God's grace only. I made no effort for it. I was happy. I want to universalise, moralise and socialise it. At the same time I want to know Maharshi's experience of the Divine.

Mrs. Jinarajadasa intervened and spoke softly: We all agree that Maharshi has brought the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. Why do you press him to answer your questions relating to his realisation? It is for you to seek and gain it.

The questioner listened to her, argued slightly and resumed his questions to Maharshi. After one or two light questions, Major Chadwick spoke sternly: "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you," says the *Bible*.

D.: How shall I realise it?

Major Chadwick: Why do you ask Maharshi to realise it for you?

D.: I do not.

Major Chadwick: The Kingdom is within you. You should realise it.

D.: It is *within* only for those who hear it.

Major Chadwick: The *Bible* says *within you*, and adds no qualifications.

The questioner felt his conversation was already too long and so retired after thanking Maharshi and others.

Talk 477.

Mrs. Jinarajadasa: How shall we be able to remember the truth experienced in dreams?

M.: Your present waking state, your dreams and your desire to remember are all thoughts. They arise only after the mind has arisen. Were you not existing in the absence of the mind?

D.: Yes, I was.

M.: The fact of your existence is also your realisation

D.: I understand it intellectually. The truth is felt in temporary flashes only. It is not abiding.

M.: Such thoughts smother up the state of your eternal realisation.

D.: The rough and tumble of town life is not congenial to realisation. Jungle retreats afford the necessary quiet and solitude.

M.: One can be free in a town and may yet be bound in jungle retreats. It is all in the mind.

D.: The mind again is *maya*, I suppose.

M.: What is *maya*? The knowledge that the mind is divorced from the Reality is *maya*. The mind is in Reality only and not apart. This knowledge is the elimination of *maya*.

Further conversation led to the question if the mind was identical with the brain. Sri Bhagavan said: The mind is only a force operating on the brain. You are now here and awake. The thoughts of the world and the surroundings are in the brain within the body. When you dream you create another self who sees the world of dream creation and the surroundings just as you do now. The dream visions are in the dream

brain which is again in the dream body. That is different from your present body. You remember the dream now. The brains are however different. Yet the visions appear in the mind. The mind therefore is not identical with the brain. Waking, dream and sleep are for the mind only.

D.: The understanding is intellectual.

M.: Intellect. Whose intellect? The problem revolves round that question.

You admit that you exist even in the absence of intellect - say, in sleep. How do you know that you exist if you have not realised your existence? Your very existence is realisation. You cannot imagine a point of time when you do not exist. So there is no period of time when realisation is not.

22nd March, 1938

Talk 478.

A certain man from Madurai asked: How to know the Power of God?

M.: You say 'I AM'. That is it. What else can say I AM?

One's own being is His Power. The trouble arises only when one says, "I am this or that, such and such." Do not do it - Be yourself. That is all.

D.: How to experience Bliss?

M.: To be free from thinking "I am now out of Bliss".

D.: That is to say free from modes of mind.

M.: To be with only one mode of mind to the exclusion of others.

D.: But Bliss must be experienced.

M.: Bliss consists in not forgetting your being. How can you be otherwise than what you really are? It is also to be the Seat of Love. Love is Bliss. Here the Seat is not different from Love.

D.: How shall I be all-pervading?

M.: Give up the thought, "I am not all-pervading now."

D.: How to permeate the separate objects?

M.: Do they exist independently of "I"? Do they say to you "We are"? You see them. You are, and then the objects are also seen. "Without me, these do not exist" - this knowledge is permeation. Owing to the idea "I am the body; there is something in me" the

separate objects are seen as if lying outside. Know that they are all within yourself. Is a piece of cloth independent of yarn? Can the objects remain without Me?

Talk 479.

D.: Which is the best of all the religions? What is Sri Bhagavan's method?

M.: All religions and methods are one and the same.

D.: Different methods are taught for liberation.

M.: Why should you be liberated? Why not remain as you are now?

D.: I want to get rid of pain. To be rid of it is said to be liberation.

M.: That is what all religions teach.

D.: But what is the method?

M.: To retrace your way back.

D.: Whence have I come?

M.: That is just what you should know. Did these questions arise in your sleep? Did you not exist then? Are you not the same being now?

D.: Yes, I *was* in sleep; so also the mind; but the senses had merged, so I could not speak.

M.: Are you *jiva*? Are you the mind? Did the mind announce itself to you in sleep?

D.: No. But elders say that the *jiva* is different from *Isvara*.

M.: Leave *Isvara* alone. Speak for yourself.

D.: What about myself? Who am I?

M.: That is just it. Know it, when all will be known; if not, ask then.

D.: On waking I see the world and I am not changed from sleep.

M.: But this is not known in sleep. Now or then, the same you remain. Who has changed now? Is your nature to be changing or remain unchanging?

D.: What is the proof?

M.: Does one's own being require a proof? Only remain aware of your own self, all else will be known.

D.: Why then do the dualists and non-dualists quarrel among themselves?

M.: If each one minds his own business, there will be no quarrel.

Talk 480.

A European lady, Mrs. Gasque, gave a slip of paper on which was written: We are thankful to Nature and the Infinite Intelligence for your Presence among us. We appreciate that your Wisdom is founded upon pure Truth and the basic principle of Life and Eternity. We are happy that you remind us to "Be still and Know THAT".

What do you consider the future of this Earth?

Answer: The answer to this question is contained in the other sheet. *Be still and know that* I AM GOD.

"Stillness" here means "Being free from thoughts".

D.: This does not answer the question. The planet has a future - what is it to be?

M.: Time and space are functions of thoughts. If thoughts do not arise there will be no future or the Earth.

D.: Time and space will remain even if we do not think of them.

M.: Do they come and tell you that they are? Do you feel them in your sleep?

D.: I was not conscious in my sleep.

M.: And yet you were existing in your sleep.

D.: I was not in my body. I had gone out somewhere and jumped in here just before waking up.

M.: Your having been away in sleep and jumping in now are mere ideas. Where were you in sleep? You were only what you are, but with this difference that you were free from thoughts in sleep.

D.: Wars are going on in the world. If we do not think, do the wars cease?

M.: Can you stop the wars? He who made the world will take care of it.

D.: God made the world and He is not responsible for the present condition of the world. It is we who are responsible for the present state.

M.: Can you stop the wars or reform the world?

D.: No.

M.: Then why do you worry yourself about what is not possible for you? Take care of yourself and the world will take care of itself.

D.: We are pacifists. We want to bring about Peace.

M.: Peace is always present. Get rid of the disturbances to Peace. This Peace is the Self.

The thoughts are the disturbances. When free from them, you are Infinite Intelligence, *i.e*., the Self. There is Perfection and Peace.

D.: The world must have a future.

M.: Do you know what it is in the present? The world and all together are the same, now as well as in the future.

D.: The world was made by the operation of Intelligence on ether and atoms.

M.: All of them are reduced to *Isvara* and *Sakti*. You are not now apart from Them. They and you are one and the same Intelligence.

After a few minutes one lady asked: "Do you ever intend to go to America?"

M.: America is just where India is (*i.e*., in the plane of thought).

Another (Spanish) lady: They say that there is a shrine in the Himalayas entering which one gets some strange vibrations which heal all diseases. Is it possible?

M.: They speak of some shrine in Nepal and also in other parts of the Himalayas where the people are said to become unconscious on entering them.

Talk 481.

Muruganar asked what *prajnana* is.

M.: Prajnana (Absolute Knowledge) is that from which *vijnana* (relative knowledge) proceeds.

D.: In the state of *vijnana* one becomes aware of the *samvit* (cosmic intelligence). But is that *suddha samvit* aware by itself without the aid of *antahkaranas* (inner organs)?

M.: It is so, even logically.

D.: Becoming aware of *samvit* in *jagrat* by *vijnana*, *prajnana* is not found self-shining. If so, it must be found in sleep.

M.: The awareness is at present through *antahkaranas*. *Prajnana* is always shining even in sleep. If one is continuously aware in *jagrat* the awareness will continue in sleep also.

Moreover, it is illustrated thus: A king comes into the hall, sits there and then leaves the place.

He did not go into the kitchen. Can one in the kitchen for that reason say, "The king did not come here"? When awareness is found in *jagrat* it must also be in sleep.

29th April, 1938

Talk 482.

Dr. Pande of Indore is on a visit here. He asked leave of Bhagavan to ask questions so that his doubts might be cleared. He wanted to be shown a practical way to realise the Self.

M.: A man was blindfolded and left in the woods. He then enquired of the way to Gandhara from each one he met on the way until he finally reached it. So also all the ways lead to Self-Realisation. They are aids to the common goal.

D.: Dhyana will be easy if there is a *pratikam* (symbol). But the enquiry into the Self does not show any *pratikam*.

M.: You admit the existence of the Self. Do you point to the *pratikam* (symbol) and say that it is the Self? Maybe you think the body is the Self. But consider your deep sleep. You do exist then. What is the *pratikam* there? So the Self can be realised without *pratikam*.

D.: Quite true. I see the force of the words. But yet are not *mantras*, etc., helpful?

M.: They are helpful. What is *mantra*? You are thinking of the simple sounds of the *mantra*. Repetition of the same excludes all other thoughts. The single thought of the *mantra japa* remains. That too drops away giving place to the Infinite Self, which is the *mantra* itself.

Mantra, *dhyana*, *bhakti*, etc., are all aids and finally lead to *Swarupa*, the Self, which is they themselves.

After a few minutes Maharshi continued:

Everyone is the Self, indeed infinite. Yet each one mistakes the body for the Self. To know anything, illumination is necessary. Such illuminating agency can only be in the form of light which is

however lighting the physical light and darkness. So then that other Light lies beyond the apparent light and darkness. It is itself neither light nor darkness but is said to be Light because It illumines both. It is also Infinite and remains as Consciousness. Consciousness is the Self of which everyone is aware. No one is away from the Self. So each one is Self-realised. Yet what a mystery that no one knows this fundamental fact, and desires to realise the Self?

This ignorance is due to the mistaking of the body for the Self. Realisation now consists in getting rid of this false idea that one is not realised. Realisation is not anything newly got. It must be already there in order that it may be permanent. Otherwise Realisation is not worth attempting.

After the false notion 'I-am-the-body' or 'I have not realised' is removed, Supreme Consciousness or the Self alone is left over, which is however called Realisation in the present state of knowledge. However, the truth is that Realisation is eternal and already there, here and now.

Finally, Realisation amounts to elimination of ignorance and nothing more or less.

D.: My profession requires my stay in my place. I cannot remain in the vicinity of *sadhus*. Can I have realisation even in the absence of *sat sanga* as necessitated by my circumstances?

M.: Sat is aham pratyaya saram = the Self of selves. The *sadhu* is that Self of selves. He is immanent in all. Can anyone remain without the Self? No. So no one is away from *sat sanga*.

30th April, 1938

Talk 483.

Mr. Sitaramiah, a visitor: What does *samyamana* mean in Patanjali Yoga Sutra?

M.: One-pointedness of mind.

D.: By such *samyamana* in the Heart, *chitta samvit* is said to result. What does it mean?

M.: Chitta samvit is *Atma jnana i.e.*, Knowledge of the Self.

Talk 484.

D.: I think that celibacy and initiation are prerequisites even for a householder in order that he may succeed in self-investigation. Am I right? Or can a householder observe celibacy and seek initiation from a master on occasions only?

M.: First ascertain who the wife and the husband are. Then these questions will not arise.

D.: Engaged in other pursuits, can the mental activities be checked and the query "Who am I?" pursued? Are they not contrary to each other?

M.: These questions arise only in the absence of strength of mind. As the mental activities diminish its strength increases.

D.: Does the Karma theory mean that the world is the result of action and reaction? If so, action and reaction of what?

M.: Until realisation there will be Karma, *i.e.*, action and reaction; after realisation there will be no Karma, no world.

Talk 485 .

D.: While engaged in *Atma vichara* (the investigation of the Self), I fall asleep. What is the remedy for it?

M.: Do *nama-sankirtana* (sing the name of God).

D.: It is ruled out in sleep.

M.: True. The practice should be continued while awake. Directly you wake up from sleep, you must resume it. The sleeper does not care for *Atma vichara*. So he need not practise anything. The waking self desires it and so he must do it.

In the course of conversation Sri Bhagavan continued: The mind is something mysterious. It consists of *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. The latter two give rise to *vikshepa*. In the *satva* aspect, it remains pure and uncontaminated. So there are no thoughts there and it is identical with the Self. The mind is like *akasa* (ether). Just as there are the objects in the *akasa*, so there are thoughts in the mind. The *akasa* is the counterpart of the mind and objects are of thought. One cannot hope to measure the universe and study the phenomena. It is impossible. For the objects are mental creations. To measure them is similar to trying to stamp with one's foot on the head of the shadow

cast by oneself. The farther one moves the farther the shadow does also. So one cannot plant one's foot on the head of the shadow. (Here Sri Bhagavan related several incidents connected with shadows including the pranks of monkeys and a mirror). A child sees his own shadow and tries to hold the head of the shadow. As he bends and puts out his arm the head moves further. The child struggles more and more. The mother, seeing the struggle, pities the young one. So she takes hold of the young hand and keeps it on his own head and tells the child to observe the head of the shadow caught in the hand. Similarly with the ignorant practiser to study the universe. The universe is only an object created by the mind and has its being in the mind. It cannot be measured as an exterior entity. One must reach the Self in order to reach the universe.

Again people often ask how the mind is controlled. I say to them, "Show me the mind and then you will know what to do." The fact is that the mind is only a bundle of thoughts. How can you extinguish it by the thought of doing so or by a desire? Your thoughts and desires are part and parcel of the mind. The mind is simply fattened by new thoughts rising up. Therefore it is foolish to attempt to kill the mind by means of the mind. The only way of doing it is to find its source and hold on to it. The mind will then fade away of its own accord. Yoga teaches *chitta vritti nirodha* (control of the activities of the mind). But I say *Atma vichara* (Self-investigation). This is the practical way. *Chitta vritti nirodha* is brought about in sleep, swoon or by starvation. As soon as the cause is withdrawn there is recrudescence of thoughts. Of what use is it then? In the state of stupor there is peace and no misery. But misery recurs when the stupor is removed. So *nirodha* (control) is useless and cannot be of lasting benefit.

How then can the benefit be made lasting? It is by finding the cause of misery. Misery is due to objects. If they are not there, there will be no contingent thoughts and so misery is wiped off. "How will objects cease to be?" is the next question. The *shrutis* and the sages say that the objects are only mental creations. They have no substantive being. Investigate the matter and ascertain the truth of the statement. The result will be the conclusion that the objective world is in the subjective consciousness. The Self is thus the only Reality which permeates and also envelops the world. Since there is

no duality, no thoughts will arise to disturb your peace. This is Realisation of the Self. The Self is eternal and so also its Realisation.

In the course of the discourse Sri Bhagavan also made a few points clearer:

Abhyasa consists in withdrawal within the Self every time you are disturbed by thought. It is not concentration or destruction of the mind but withdrawal into the Self.

Dhyana, bhakti, japa, etc., are aids to keep out the multiplicity of thoughts. A single thought prevails which too eventually dissolves in the Self.

The questioner quoted that the mind starved of ideas amounted to realisation and asked what the experience is in that state. He himself read out a passage from Mr. Brunton that it was indescribable. The answer was there. He again ventured out that it must be like looking through an unsilvered mirror, as contrasted with the present experience corresponding to looking on a silvered mirror.

Sri Bhagavan said it was a mirror facing another clear mirror, *i.e*., no reflection.

2nd May, 1938

Talk 486.

Mr. Ganapatram: How shall I find out "Who am I"?

M.: Are there two selves for the one self to find the other?

D.: The Self must be only one consisting of two aspects of 'I' and *sankalpa* (*i.e*., of thinker and thought).

After a time he continued: Please say how I shall realise the 'I'. Am I to make the *japa*, "Who am I?"

M.: No *japa* of the kind is meant.

D.: Am I to think "Who am I"?

M.: You have known that the 'I-thought' springs forth. Hold the 'I-thought' and find its *moola* (source).

D.: May I know the way?

M.: Do as you have now been told and see.

D.: I do not understand what I should do.

M.: If it is anything objective the way can be shown objectively. This is subjective.

D.: But I do not understand.

M.: What! Do you not understand that you are?

D.: Please tell me the way.

M.: Is it necessary to show the way in the interior of your own home? This is within you.

D.: What do you advise me to do?

M.: Why should you do anything and what should you do? Only keep quiet. Why not do so? Each one must do according to his own state.

D.: Please tell me what is suitable to me. I want to hear from you.

(No answer.)

Talk 487.

An English lady, a young woman, came here dressed in a Muslim sari. She had evidently been in North India and met Dr. G. H. Mees.

Sri Bhagavan read out a stanza "The Black Sun" from the anniversary number of *The Vision*, written by Swami Bharatananda.

After a few minutes, Miss J. asked: One gathers from the stanza that one should keep on meditating until one gets merged in the state of consciousness. Do you think it right?

M.: Yes.

D.: I go further and ask: Is it right that one should, by conscious will, go into that state from which there is no return?

(No answer) - Dinner bell.

Afternoon

D.: What is the object of Self-Realisation?

M.: Self-Realisation is the final goal and it is the end in itself.

D.: l mean, what is the use of Self-Realisation?

M.: Why should you seek Self-Realisation? Why do you not rest content with your present state? It is evident that you are discontented with the present state. The discontent is at an end if you realise the Self.

D.: What is that Self-Realisation which removes the discontent? I am in the world and there are wars in it. Can Self-Realisation put an end to it?

M.: Are you in the world? Or is the world in you?

D.: I do not understand. The world is certainly around me.

M.: You speak of the world and happenings in it. They are mere ideas in you. The ideas are in the mind. The mind is within you. And so the world is within you.

D.: I do not follow you. Even if I do not think of the world, the world is still there.

M.: Do you mean to say that the world is apart from the mind and it can exist in the absence of the mind?

D.: Yes.

M.: Does the world exist in your deep sleep?

D.: It does.

M.: Do you see it in your sleep?

D.: No, I don't. But others, who are awake, see it.

M.: Are you so aware in your sleep? Or do you become aware of the other's knowledge now?

D.: In my waking state.

M.: So you speak of waking knowledge and not of sleep-experience. The existence of the world in your waking and dream states is admitted because they are the products of the mind. The mind is withdrawn in sleep and the world is in the condition of a seed. It becomes manifest over again when you wake up. The ego springs forth, identifies itself with the body and sees the world. So the world is a mental creation.

D.: How can it be?

M.: Do you not create a world in your dream? The waking state also is a long drawn out dream. There must be a seer behind the waking and dream experiences. Who is that seer? Is it the body?

D.: It cannot be.

M.: Is it the mind?

D.: It must be so.

M.: But you remain in the absence of the mind.

D.: How?

M.: In deep sleep.

D.: l do not know if I am then.

M.: If you were not how do you recollect yesterday's experiences? Is it possible that there was a break in the continuity of the 'I' during sleep?

D.: It may be.

M.: If so, a Johnson may wake up as a Benson. How will the identity of the individual be established?

D.: I don't know.

M.: If this argument is not clear, follow a different line. You admit "I slept well", "I feel refreshed after a sound sleep". So sleep was your experience. The experiencer now identifies himself with the 'I' in the speaker. So this 'I' must have been in sleep also.

D.: Yes.

M.: So 'I' was in sleep, if the world was then there, did it say that it existed?

D.: No. But the world tells me its existence now. Even if I deny its existence, I may knock myself against a stone and hurt my foot. The injury proves the existence of the stone and so of the world.

M.: Quite so. The stone hurts the foot. Does the foot say that there is the stone?

D.: No. - 'I'.

M.: Who is this 'I'? It cannot be the body nor the mind as we have seen before. This 'I' is the one who experiences the waking, dream and sleep states. The three states are changes which do not affect the individual. The experiences are like pictures passing on a screen in the cinema. The appearance and disappearance of the pictures do not affect the screen. So also, the three states alternate with one another leaving the Self unaffected. The waking and the dream states are creations of the mind. So the Self covers all. To know that the Self remains happy in its perfection is Self-Realisation. Its use lies in the realisation of Perfection and thus of Happiness.

D.: Can it be complete happiness to remain Self-realised if one does not contribute to the happiness of the world? How can one be so

happy when there is a war in Spain, a war in China? Is it not selfishness to remain Self-realised without helping the world?

M.: The Self was pointed out to you to cover the universe and also transcend it. The world cannot remain apart from the Self. If the realisation of such Self be called selfishness that selfishness must cover the world also. It is nothing contemptible.

D.: Does not the realised man continue to live just like a non-realised being?

M.: Yes, with this difference that the realised being does not see the world as being apart from the Self, he possesses true knowledge and the internal happiness of being perfect, whereas the other person sees the world apart, feels imperfection and is miserable. Otherwise their physical actions are similar.

D.: The realised being also knows that there are wars being waged in the world, just like the other man.

M.: Yes.

D.: How then can he be happy?

M.: Is the cinema screen affected by a scene of fire burning or sea rising? So it is with the Self.

The idea that I am the body or the mind is so deep that one cannot get over it even if convinced otherwise. One experiences a dream and knows it to be unreal on waking. Waking experience is unreal in other states. So each state contradicts the others. They are therefore mere changes taking place in the seer, or phenomena appearing in the Self, which is unbroken and remains unaffected by them. Just as the waking, dream and sleep states are phenomena, so also birth, growth and death are phenomena in the Self. which continues to be unbroken and unaffected. Birth and death are only ideas. They pertain to the body or the mind. The Self exists before the birth of this body and will remain after the death of this body. So it is with the series of bodies taken up in succession. The Self is immortal. The phenomena are changeful and appear mortal. The fear of death is of the body. It is not true of the Self. Such fear is due to ignorance. Realisation means True Knowledge of the Perfection and Immortality of the Self. Mortality is only an idea and cause of misery. You get rid of it by realising the Immortal nature of the Self.

The same lady continued: If the world is only a dream, how should it be harmonised with the Eternal Reality?

M.: The harmony consists in the realisation of its inseparateness from the Self.

D.: But a dream is fleeting and unreal. It is also contradicted by the waking state.

M.: The waking experiences are similar.

D.: One lives fifty years and finds a continuity in the waking experience which is absent in dreams.

M.: You go to sleep and dream a dream in which the experiences of fifty years are condensed within the short duration of the dream, say five minutes. There is also a continuity in the dream. Which is real now? Is the period covering fifty years of your waking state real or the short duration of five minutes of your dream? The standards of time differ in the two states. That is all. There is no other difference between the experiences.

D.: The spirit remains unaffected by the passing phenomena and by the successive bodies of repeated births. How does each body get the life to set it acting?

M.: The spirit is differentiated from matter and is full of life. The body is animated by it.

D.: The realised being is then the spirit and unaware of the world.

M.: He sees the world but not as separate from the Self.

D.: If the world is full of pain why should he continue the world-idea?

M.: Does the realised being tell you that the world is full of pain? It is the other one who feels the pain and seeks the help of the wise saying that the world is painful. Then the wise one explains from his experience that if one withdraws within the Self there is an end of pain. The pain is felt so long as the object is different from oneself. But when the Self is found to be an undivided whole who and what is there to feel? The realised mind is the Holy Spirit and the other mind is the home of the devil. For the realised being this is the Kingdom of Heaven. "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you." That Kingdom is *here* and *now*.

Talk 488.

A group of young men asked: "It is said that healthy mind can be only in a healthy body. Should we not attempt to keep the body always strong and healthy?"

M.: In that way there will be no end of attention to the health of the body.

D.: The present experiences are the result of past Karma. If we know the mistakes committed in the past, we can rectify them.

M.: If one mistake is rectified there yet remains the whole *sanchita* which is going to give you innumerable births. So that is not the procedure. The more you prune a plant, the more vigorously it grows. The more you rectify your Karma, the more it accumulates. Find the root of Karma and cut it off.

4th May, 1938

Talk 489.

Another group of visitors was asking the method of Realisation. In the course of a reply Sri Bhagavan said: "Holding the mind and investigating it is advised for a beginner. But what is mind after all? It is a projection of the Self. See for whom it appears and from where it rises. The 'I-thought' will be found to be the root-cause. Go deeper; the 'I-thought' disappears and there is an infinitely expanded 'I-consciousness'. That is otherwise called *Hiranyagarbha*. When it puts on limitations it appears as individuals."

Talk 490.

The English lady desired to have a private talk with Sri Bhagavan. She began, "I am returning to England. I leave this place this evening. I want to have the happiness of Self-Realisation in my home. Of course it is not easy in the West. But I shall strive for it. What is the way to do it?"

M.: If Realisation be something outside you a way can be shown consistent with the safety of the individual, his capacity. etc. Then the questions if it is realisable and, if so, in what time - will also arise. But here, Realisation is of the Self. You cannot remain without

the Self. The Self is always realised. But only you do not recognise the fact. The Realisation is now obscured by the present world-idea. The world is now seen outside you and the idea associated with it obscures your real nature. All that is needed is to overcome this ignorance and then the Self stands revealed. No special effort is necessary to realise the Self. All efforts are for eliminating the present obscuration of the Truth.

A lady is wearing a necklace round her neck. She forgets it, imagines it to be lost and impulsively looks for it here, there and everywhere. Not finding it, she asks her friends if they have found it anywhere, until one kind friend points to her neck and tells her to feel the necklace round the neck. The seeker does so and feels happy that the necklace is found. Again, when she meets her other friends, they ask her if her lost necklace was found. She says 'yes' to them, as if it were lost and later recovered. Her happiness on re-discovering it round her neck is the same as if some lost property was recovered. In fact she never lost it nor recovered it. And yet she was once miserable and now she is happy. So also with the realisation of the Self. The Self is always realised. The Realisation is now obscured. When the veil is removed the person feels happy at rediscovering the ever-realised Self. The ever-present Realisation appears to be a new Realisation.

Now, what should one do to overcome the present ignorance. Be eager to have the true knowledge. As this eagerness grows the wrong knowledge diminishes in strength until it finally disappears.

D.: The other day you were saying that there is no awareness in deep sleep. But I have on rare occasions become aware of sleep even in that state.

M.: Now, of these three factors, the awareness, sleep and knowledge of it, the first one is changeless. That awareness, which cognised sleep as a state, now sees the world also in the waking state. The negation of the world is the state of sleep. The world may appear or disappear - that is to say, one may be awake or asleep - the awareness is unaffected. It is one continuous whole over which the three states of waking, dream and sleep pass. Be that awareness even now. That is the Self - that is Realisation - there is Peace - there is Happiness.

The lady thanked Maharshi and retired.

7th May. 1938

Talk 491.

Mr. Kishorelal Mashruwala, President, Gandhi Seva Sangh, asked: "How is *Brahmacharya* to be practised in order that it may be successfully lived up to?"

M.: It is a matter of will-power. *Satvic* food, prayers, etc., are useful aids to it.

D.: Young men have fallen into bad habits. They desire to get over them and seek our advice.

M.: Mental reform is needed.

D.: Can we prescribe any special food, exercise, etc., to them?

M.: There are some medicines. Yogic *asanas* and *satvic* food are also useful.

D.: Some young persons have taken a vow of *brahmacharya*. They repent of the vow after the lapse of ten or twelve years. Under these circumstances should we encourage young persons to take the vow of *brahmacharya*?

M.: This question will not arise in the case of true *brahmacharya*.

D.: Some young men take the vow of *brahmacharya* without knowing its full implications. When they find it difficult to carry it out in practice, they seek our advice.

M.: They need not take a vow but they may try it without the vow.

D.: Is *naishthika brahmacharya* (life-long celibacy) essential as a *sadhana* for Self-Realisation?

M.: Realisation itself is *naishthika brahmacharya*. The vow is not *brahmacharya*. Life in Brahman is *brahmacharya* and it is not a forcible attempt at it.

D.: It is said that *kama* (desire), *krodha* (anger), etc.. vanish in the presence of the Sadguru. Is it so?

M.: It is correct. *Kama* and *krodha* must vanish before Self-Realisation.

D.: But all the disciples of a guru are not of the same degree of advancement. There are found lapses in a few cases. Who is responsible for such lapses?

M.: There is no connection between Self-Realisation and individual predispositions (*samskara*). It is not always possible to live up to the ideal of the Guru.

D.: Do not passions affect Realisation?

M.: The attempt to cleanse oneself will be automatic.

D.: Is it not necessary to wash off all impurities before Realisation?

M.: Jnana will wash them clean.

D.: Gandhiji is often perplexed finding his intimate disciples going wrong. He wonders how it could happen and thinks that it is due to his own defects. Is it so?

M.: (Sri Bhagavan smiled and answered after a few minutes) Gandhiji has struggled so long to perfect himself. All others will be right in due course.

D.: Is the Hindu view of reincarnation correct?

M.: No definite answer is possible for this question. There are pros and cons for the view. Even the present birth is denied *natvevaham jatu nasam* etc., (*Bhagavad Gita*). We were never born, etc.

D.: Is not individuality *anadi* (without beginning)?

M.: Investigate and see if there is any individuality at all. Ask this question after solving this problem.

Nammalvar says: "In ignorance I took the ego to be myself; however, with right knowledge, the ego is nowhere and only you remain as the SELF."

Both monists and dualists are agreed on the necessity of Self-Realisation. Let us do it first and then discuss the side-issues. *Advaita* or *dvaita* cannot be decided on theoretical considerations alone. If the Self is realised the question will not arise at all. Even Suka had no confidence in his *brahmacharya* whereas Sri Krishna was sure of his *brahmacharya*. Self-Realisation is designated by so many different names, *satya, brahmacharya*, etc. What is natural to the state of Self-Realisation forms the disciplinary course in the other state. "I-am-the-body" idea will become extinct only on Self-Realisation. With its extinction the *vasanas* become extinct and all virtues will remain ever.

D.: Samskaras are said to persist even in a *jnani*.

M.: Yes. They are *bhoga hetu* (leading to enjoyment only) and not *bandha hetu*.

D.: This fact is often abused by fakes who pretend to be *sadhus* but lead vicious lives. They say it is *prarabdha* (remnant of past Karma). How shall we mark off the fakes from the genuine *sadhus*?

M.: The one who has given up the idea of being the doer cannot repeat, "This is my *prarabdha*". "The *jnanis* lead different lives" is said for the benefit of others. The *jnanis* cannot make use of this in explanation of their lives and conduct.

(After a few minutes, Sri Bhagavan remarked about Mr. Kishorelal's weak body).

Mr. Kishorelal: I am asthmatic. I have never been strong. Even as a baby I was not fed on my mother's milk.

M.: Here the mind is strong and the body is weak.

D.: I wanted to practise Raja Yoga. I could not do it because of my physical unfitness. The mind also began to wander with the movement of the body.

M.: If the mind be kept immovable let the body change as much as it likes.

D.: Is it not a handicap to the beginner?

M.: Attempts must be made in spite of handicaps.

D.: Of course. But they will be momentary.

M.: The idea of 'momentary' is one among so many other ideas. So long as thoughts persist this idea also will recur. Concentration is our own nature (*i.e*. BE-ing). There is the effort now: but it ceases after Self-Realisation.

D.: It is said to be the interval between flights of mind

M.: This too is due to the activity of the mind.

The Devotee submitted that whenever he had thought that he had found something original, he later discovered that he was already forestalled.

Sri Bhagavan pointed out that everything remains already in the germinal form and so there can be nothing new.

8th May, 1938

Talk 492.

In a suit by the temple against the Government regarding the ownership of the Hill Sri Bhagavan was cited as a witness. He was examined by a commission. In the course of the examination-in-chief Sri Bhagavan said that Siva always remains in three forms: (1) as *Parabrahman* (2) as *Linga* (here as the Hill) and (3) as *Siddha*. (*Brahma Rupa; Linga Rupa; Siddha Rupa*).

There are some *tirthas* on the Hill, *e.g*., *Mulaipal Tirtha* and *Pada Tirtha*, said to have been originated for or by Virupakshi Devar and Guha Namassivayar. There is also *Rshabha Tirtha*. All of them are in good condition.

Siva originally appeared as a column of Light. On being prayed to, the Light disappeared into the Hill and manifested as Linga. Both are Siva.

Maharshi said: The buildings or asramams grow around me. I do not wish for them. I do not ask for them nor prevent their formation. I have known that actions are done even though I did not want them to be done. So I conclude that they *must* happen and I therefore do not say 'no'.

Question: Is the present Sarvadhikari to be your successor?

M.: Yes. Only management.

(*i.e*., succession here means simple supervision).

Question: Is the work now being carried out by him?

M.: He simply supervises the work. The work is being done by others as well.

18th May, 1938

Talk 493.

An Andhra visitor: What will aid me to fix my attention always at Thy Holy Feet?

M.: The thought 'Am I ever away from the feet?'

D.: How is this thought to be fixed?

M.: By driving away other thoughts which counteract this.

Talk 494.

Sri Bhagavan had gone through "Turn Eastwards" - the whole book of Mademoiselle Pascaline Maillert - and spoke for about an hour on that book. He said that the writing is full of feeling and the writer is sincere. The book is written in simple style and finishes off with remembrance of Himself. A few errors here and there might be pointed out to be corrected in subsequent editions. Nandanar Charitra has been repeated twice under the mistaken notion that the incident was on two different occasions. *Prithvi, Ap*, etc., *lingas* are wrongly located. Sri Bhagavan thinks the book well-written. He interprets "Turn Eastwards" as "Turn to the Source of Light". This book is a good supplement to Mr. Brunton's book.

29th May, 1938

Talk 495.

A Cochin Brahmin, Professor in the Ernakulam College, had an interesting conversation with Sri Bhagavan. Sri Bhagavan advised surrender to God. The visitor gave a glimpse of an ICS Officer. The gentleman while a student was an atheist or an agnostic. He is very pious now and the change has surprised everyone who had known him before.

In further conversation, the following points were noteworthy -

The visitor said: "One must become satiate with the fulfilment of desires before they are renounced." Sri Bhagavan smiled and cut in: "Fire might as well be put out by pouring spirit over the flames. (All laugh). The more the desires are fulfilled, the deeper grows the *samskara*. They must become weaker before they cease to assert themselves. That weakness is brought about by restraining oneself and not by losing oneself in desires.

D.: How can they be rendered weaker?

M.: By knowledge. You know that you are not the mind. The desires are in the mind. Such knowledge helps one to control them.

D.: But they are not controlled in our practical lives.

M.: Every time you attempt satisfaction of a desire the knowledge comes that it is better to desist. Repeated reminders of this kind

will in due course weaken the desires. What is your true nature? How can you ever forget it? Waking, dream and sleep are mere phases of the mind. They are not of the Self. You are the witness of these states. Your true nature is found in sleep.

D.: But we are advised not to fall into sleep during meditation.

M.: That is stupor you must guard against. That sleep which alternates with waking is not true sleep. That waking which alternates with sleep is not true waking. Are you now awake? You are not. You are required to wake up to your real state. You should not fall into false sleep nor keep falsely awake. Hence:

Laye sambodhayeccittam vikshiptam samayet punah.

What does it mean? It means that you should not fall into any one of these states but remain amidst them in your true unsullied nature.

D.: The states are of our mind only.

M.: Whose mind? Hold it and see.

D.: The mind cannot be held. It is that which creates all these. It is known only by its effects and not in its true nature.

M.: Quite so. You see the colours of the spectrum. Together they form the white light. But seven colours are seen through the prism. Similarly, the one Self resolves itself into so many phases, mind, world, body, etc. The Self is seen as the mind, the body or the world. That is to say, it becomes whatever you perceive it to be.

D.: These are difficult to follow in practice. I will hold on to God and surrender.

M.: That is the best.

D.: How can I do my duties without attachment? There is my wife, there are my children. I must do my duty towards them. Affection is necessary. Am I right?

M.: How do you do your work in the College?

D.: (laughing) For wages.

M.: Not because you are attached, simply as doing your duty.

D.: But my pupils expect me to love them.

M.: "Detachment in the interior and attachment in appearance," says *Yoga Vasishta*.

9th June, 1938

Talk 496.

A *Swami* belonging to Sri Ramakrishna Mission had a very interesting conversation with Sri Bhagavan in the course of which Sri Bhagavan observed:

M.: Avidya (ignorance) is the obstacle for knowing your true nature even at the present moment.

D.: How is one to get over *Avidya*?

M.: Ya na vidyate sa avidya (What is not, is *avidya*). So it is itself a myth. If it really be, how can it perish? Its being is false and so it disappears.

D.: Although I understand it intellectually, I cannot realise the Self.

M.: Why should this thought disturb your present state of realisation.

D.: The Self is One, but yet I do not find myself free from the present trouble.

M.: Who says this? Is it the Self which is only one? The question contradicts itself.

D.: Grace is necessary for realisation.

M.: Inasmuch as you, being a man, now understand that there is a higher power guiding you, it is due to Grace. Grace is within you. *Isvaro gururatmeti* (*Isvara*, Guru and the Self are synonymous).

D.: I pray for that Grace.

M.: Yes, yes.

10th June, 1938

Talk 497.

In the course of a different conversation. Sri Bhagavan said:

Satva is the light,
Rajas is the subject, and
Tamas is the object.

Even the *satva* light is only reflected light. Were it pure, original Light, there would be no modification in it. The *manokasa* (mind-ether) is reflected as *bhootakasa* (element-ether) and objects are seen as being separate from the subject.

Samadhi is present even in *vyavaharadasa* (practical life). Our activities (*vyavahara*) have no existence apart from *samadhi*. The screen is there when the pictures move past on it and also when they are not projected. Similarly, the Self is always there in *vyavahara* (activity) or in *shanti* (peace).

Talk 498.

People often say that a *mukta purusha* should go out and preach his message to the people. They argue, how can anyone be a *mukta* so long as there is misery by his side? True. But who is a *mukta*? Does he see misery beside him? They want to determine the state of a *mukta* without themselves realising the state. From the standpoint of the *mukta* their contention amounts to this: a man dreams a dream in which he finds several persons. On waking up, he asks, "Have the dream individuals also wakened?" It is ridiculous.

Again, a good man says, "It does not matter even if I do not get *mukti*. Or let me be the last man to get it so that I shall help all others to be *muktas* before I am one." It is all very good. Imagine a dreamer saying, "May all these wake up before I do". The dreamer is no more absurd than the amiable philosopher aforesaid.

Talk 499.

The *Swami* of Sri Ramakrishna Mission had more questions to ask:

Swamiji, I went up the hill to see the *asramas* in which you lived in your youth. I have also read your life. May I know if you did not then feel that there is God to whom you should pray or that you should practise something in order to reach this state?

M.: Read the life and you will understand. *Jnana* and *ajnana* are of the same degree of truth; that is, both are imagined by the ignorant; that is not true from the standpoint of the *jnani*.

D.: Is a *jnani* capable or likely to commit sins?

M.: An *ajnani* sees someone as a *jnani* and identifies him with the body. Because he does not know the Self and, mistakes his body for the Self, he extends the same mistake to the state of the *jnani*. The *jnani* is therefore considered to be the physical frame.

Again since the *ajnani*, though he is not the doer, yet imagines himself to be the doer and considers the actions of the body his own, he thinks the *jnani* to be similarly acting when the body is active. But the *jnani* himself knows the Truth and is not confounded. The state of a *jnani* cannot be determined by the *ajnani* and therefore the question troubles only the *ajnani* and never does it arise for the *jnani*. If he is a doer he must determine the nature of the actions. The Self cannot be the doer. Find out who is the doer and the Self is revealed.

D.: There could be no *advaita* in actions. That is how the questions arose.

M.: But the stanza says there should be. This 'do' is applicable only to the practiser and not the accomplished ones.

D.: Yes. I quite see it. Moreover, *advaita* cannot be practised in one's dealings with the Guru. For, consistently with it, he cannot receive instructions.

M.: Yes, the Guru is within and not without. A Tamil saint has said, "O Guru! always abiding within me, but manifesting now in human form only to guide and protect me!" What is within as the Self manifests in due course as Guru in human shape.

D.: So it amounts to this. To see a *jnani* is not to understand him. You see the *jnani's* body and not his *jnanam*. One must therefore be a *jnani* to know a *jnani*.

M.: The *jnani* sees no one as an *ajnani*. All are only *jnanis* in his sight. In the ignorant state one superimposes his ignorance on a *jnani* and mistakes him for a doer. In the state of *jnana*, the *jnani* sees nothing separate from the Self. The Self is all shining and only pure *jnana*. So there is no *ajnana* in his sight. There is an illustration for this kind of allusion or super-imposition. Two friends went to sleep side by side. One of them dreamt that both of them had gone on a long journey and had strange experiences. On waking up he recapitulated them and asked his friend if it was not so. The other one simply ridiculed him saying that it was only his dream and could not affect the other.

So it is with the *ajnani* who superimposes his illusive ideas on others.

Regarding *ajnana* in early youth and *jnana* at the present time, Sri Bhagavan said: There is no *jnana* as it is commonly understood. The ordinary ideas of *jnana* and *ajnana* are only relative and false. They are not real and therefore not abiding. The true state is the non-dual Self. It is eternal and abides whether one is aware or not. It is like *kanthabharana* or the tenth man.

D.: Someone else points it out.

M.: That one is not external. You mistake the body for the Guru. But the Guru does not think himself so. He is the formless Self. That is within you; he appears without only to guide you.

Talk 500.

D.: When all the thoughts are banished and the mind is still or enters into a state of nothingness or emptiness, what is the nature of effort needed on the part of the 'seeker' to have a *pratyakshabhava* of the 'sought' (*e.g.*, seeing a mango as a mango)?

M.: Who sees nothingness or emptiness? What is *pratyaksha*? Do you call perception of mango *pratyaksha*? It involves the play of *karma, karta,* and *karya* (action, doer and deed). So it is relative and not absolute. Because you see a thing now you say there is nothing afterwards (*i.e.*, when you no longer see it). Both are functions of the mind. What lies behind both these assertions is *pratyaksha*. There is *indriya pratyaksha* (directly perceived by senses), *manasa pratyaksha* (directly perceived by the mind) and *sakshat pratyaksha* (realised as the very Being). The last alone is true. The others are relative and untrue.

D.: If no effort is needed, can the perpetuated state of emptiness of mind be called the state of realisation?

M.: Effort is needed so long as there is mind. The state of emptiness has been the bone of contention in all philosophies.

D.: Is there anything like *pratyakshabhava* in the state of realisation or is realisation merely felt or experienced as the very Being or *Sthiti* of the soul?

M.: Pratyaksha is very being and it is not feeling, etc.

D.: Until the seeker realizes that he is the sought, the above questions arise for him (the former).

M.: True. See if you are the seeker. The Self is often mistaken for the knower. Is there not the Self in deep sleep, *i.e.*, nescience? Therefore the Self is beyond knower and knowledge. These doubts are in the realm of mind. To speak from this point of view, the advice is to keep the mind clear, and when *rajas* and *tamas* are wiped off, then the *satva* mind alone exists. So the 'I' vanishes in the *satva* (*oonadhal kan*).

Jnana chakshus does not mean that it is an organ of perception like the other sense-organs. *Jnanameva chakshuh*. Television, etc., are not functions of *jnana chakshus*. So long as there is a subject and also an object it is only relative knowledge. *Jnana* lies beyond relative knowledge. It is absolute.

The Self is the source of subject and object. Now ignorance prevailing, the subject is taken to be the source. The subject is the knower and forms one of the triads whose components cannot exist independent of one another. So the subject or the knower cannot be the ultimate Reality. Reality lies beyond subject and object. When realised there will be no room for doubt.

"*Bhidyate hridayagranthih*
chhidyante sarvasamsayah."

The heart knot is snapped; doubts are set at rest. That is called *pratyaksha* and not what you are thinking of. *Avidya nasa* is alone Self-Realisation. Self-Realisation is only *owpacharika*. Self-Realisation is only a euphemism for elimination of ignorance.

12th July, 1938

Talk 501.

A young Mysorean asked:

D.: How did I get this body?

M.: You speak of 'I' and the 'body'. There is the relationship between the two. You are not therefore the body. The question does not occur to the body because it is inert. There is an occasion when you are not aware of the body - namely, in deep sleep. The question does not arise then. Nevertheless you are there in sleep. To whom does the question arise now?

D.: The ego.

M.: Yes. The body and the ego rise up together and sink together. There is an occasion when you are not associated with the ego in deep sleep. Now you are associated with the ego. Of these two states which is your real state? You are present in sleep and the same "You" is present now too. Why should the doubt arise now and not then? You are right in saying that it is for the ego. You are not the ego. The ego is intermediate between the Self and the body. You are the Self. Find out the origin of the ego and see if the doubt persists.

Sri Bhagavan added after a few minutes: The answer, according to *sastras*, will be that the body is due to *karma*. The question will be how did *karma* arise? We must say "from a previous body" and so on without end. The direct method of attack is not to depend on invisible hypotheses but to ask "Whose *Karma* is it? Or whose body?" Hence I answered in this manner. This is more purposeful.

14th August, 1938

Talk 502.

Sjt. Rajendra Prasad and Sjt. Jamnalal Bajaj with others are on a visit to Sri Maharshi.

16th August - Sjt. J. B. asked questions:

D.: How is the mind to be steadily kept right?

M.: All living beings are aware of their surroundings and therefore intellect must be surmised in all of them. At the same time, there is a difference between the intellect of man and that of other animals, because man not only sees the world as it is and acts accordingly, but also seeks fulfilment of desires and is not satisfied with the existing state of affairs. In his attempt to fulfil his desires he extends his vision far and wide and yet he turns away dissatisfied. He now begins to think and reason.

The desire for permanency of happiness and of peace bespeaks such permanency in his own nature. Therefore he seeks to find and regain his own nature, *i.e.*, his Self. That found, all is found.

Such inward seeking is the path to be gained by man's intellect. The intellect itself realises after continuous practice that it is enabled

by some Higher Power to function. It cannot itself reach that Power. So it ceases to function after a certain stage. When it thus ceases to function the Supreme Power is still left there all alone. That is Realisation; that is the finality; that is the goal.

It is thus plain that the purpose of the intellect is to realise its own dependence upon the Higher Power and its inability to reach the same. So it must annihilate itself before the goal is gained.

D.: A sloka is quoted which means: "I do not desire kingdoms, etc. Only let me serve Thee for ever and there lies my highest pleasure." Is that right?

M.: Yes. There is room for *kama* (desire) so long as there is an object apart from the subject (*i.e.*, duality). There can be no desire if there is no object. The state of no-desire is *moksha*. There is no duality in sleep and also no desire. Whereas there is duality in the waking state and desire also is there. Because of duality a desire arises for the acquisition of the object. That is the outgoing mind, which is the basis of duality and of desire. If one knows that Bliss is none other than the Self the mind becomes inward turned. If the Self is gained all the desires are fulfilled. That is the *apta kamah atma kamah akamascha* (fulfilment of desire) of the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*. That is *moksha*.

Here J. B. tried to make himself clear by saying that what he meant by *sadbuddhi* was not the same as *buddhi*. It means that which holds fast to the good, the right and the chosen path. He wanted to know how such steadfastness could be gained.

M.: What is wanted for gaining the highest goal is loss of individuality. The intellect is co-extensive with individuality. Loss of individuality can only be after the disappearance of *buddhi,* good or bad. The question therefore does not arise.

D.: But yet one must know the right thing, choose the right path, practise the right *dharma* and hold fast to it. Otherwise he is lost.

M.: True strength accrues by keeping in the right direction without swerving from it.

D.: Difficulties are met with. How is one to get the strength necessary to overcome the obstacles which beset one's path?

M.: By means of devotion and company of the sages.

D.: Loss of individuality was just before mentioned as a prerequisite to *moksha*. Now devotion and association with the wise are advised as the methods. Is there not individuality implied in them *e.g.*, in "I am a *bhakta*", "I am a *satsangi*"?

M.: The method is pointed out to the seeker. The seeker has certainly not lost his individuality so far. Otherwise the question would not have arisen. The way is shown to effect the loss of individuality of the seeker. It is thus appropriate.

D.: Is the desire for *swaraj* right?

M.: Such desire no doubt begins with self-interest. Yet practical work for the goal gradually widens the outlook so that the individual becomes merged in the country. Such merging of the individuality is desirable and the related *karma* is *nishkama* (unselfish) .

D.: If *swaraj* is gained after a long struggle and terrible sacrifices, is not the person justified in being pleased with the result and elated by it?

M.: He must have in the course of his work surrendered himself to the Higher Power whose Might must be kept in mind and never lost sight of. How then can he be elated? He should not even care for the result of his actions. Then alone the *karma* becomes unselfish.

D.: How can unerring rectitude be ensured for the worker?

M.: If he has surrendered himself to God or to Guru the Power to which he had surrendered will take him on the right course. The worker need no longer concern himself about the rectitude or otherwise of the course. The doubt will arise only if he fails to obey the Master in all details.

D.: Is there not any Power on earth which can bestow Grace on Its devotees so that they may grow strong to work for the country and gain *swaraj*? (Sri Maharshi remained silent. This, He later said, signified that such was the case).

D.: Is not the *tapasya* of the ancient *mahatmas* of the land available for the benefit of its present-day inheritors?

M.: It is, but the fact must not be overlooked that no one can claim to be the sole beneficiary. The benefits are shared by all alike.

(After a pause) Is it without such saving Grace that the present awakening has come into being? (Here Sri Bhagavan said that before His arrival in Tiruvannamalai in 1896, there was not any clear political thought in India. Only Dadabhai Nauroji had become an M.P.).

After a short pause, J. B. said: Sri Rajendra Prasad is such a noble and selfless worker for the country that he has sacrificed a very lucrative career for this work. The country needs him. And yet he is not in good health, and is always weak and ailing. Why should there be such cruelty to such a noble son of the country?

(Sri Maharshi simply smiled a benign smile).

17th August, 1938

Talk 503.

An American gentleman, Mr. J. M. Lorey, has been staying in the Asramam for about two months. He asked:

I am leaving tonight. It gives me pain to tear myself away from this place. But I must go to America. I ask for a message from the Master. The Master understands me even better than I do myself. So I pray for a message to keep me up when I am away from the Master.

M.: The Master is not outside you as you seem to imagine. He is within, is in fact the Self. Recognise this truth. Seek within you and find Him there. Then you will have constant communion with Him. The message is always there; it is never silent; it can never forsake you: nor can you ever move away from the Master.

Your mind is outgoing. Because of that tendency it sees objects as being outside and the Master among them. But the Truth is different. The Master is the Self. Turn the mind within and you will find the objects within. You will also realise that it is the Master who is your very Self and there is nothing but Him.

Because you identify yourself with the body you have accepted objects as being outside you. But are you the body? You are not. You are the Self. *There* are all the objects and the whole universe. Nothing can escape the Self. How then can you move away from the Master who is your very Self? Suppose your body moves from

place to place; does it ever move away from your Self? Similarly, you can never be without the Master.

Mr. Lorey was struck by the answer although he was already familiar with the Master's ways. He was even visibly moved. He prayed that the Grace of the Master might abide with him.

Sri Bhagavan: The Master being the Self. Grace is inseparable from the Self.

Mr. L. Saluted Sri Maharshi with intense fervour, saying: that he might be enabled to realise the Truth.

M.: Is there any moment when you have not realised the Self? Can you ever be apart from the Self? You are always That.

D.: You are the great Master shedding joy and bliss on the world. Your love is indeed unlimited that you choose to abide in the world in human shape! But I wish to know if one should necessarily realise one's Self before being of help to the country and a leader of men.

M.: Realise the Self first and the rest will follow.

D.: America is now the foremost country in industrial matters, mechanical engineering, scientific advance and other worldly affairs. Will she come up to the same level in spiritual life also?

M.: Certainly, she is bound to.

D.: Thank God that it will be so! I am a partner in an Engineering firm. But it is not of vital concern to me. I try to bring spiritual ideals into the work-a-day life of the firm.

M.: That is good. If you surrender yourself to the Higher Power all is well. That Power sees your affairs through. Only so long as you think that you are the worker you are obliged to reap the fruits of your actions. If on the other hand, you surrender yourself and recognise your individual self as only a tool of the Higher Power, that Power will take over your affairs along with the fruits of actions. You are no longer affected by them and the work goes on unhampered. Whether you recognise the Power or not the scheme of things does not alter. Only there is a change of outlook. Why should you bear your load on the head when you are travelling on a train? It carries you and your load whether the load is on your head or on the floor of the train. You are not lessening the burden of the train by keeping

it on your head but only straining yourself unnecessarily. Similar is the sense of doership in the world by the individuals.

D.: I have been interesting myself in metaphysics for over twenty years. But I have not gained any novel experience as so many others claim to do. I have no powers of clairvoyance, clairaudience, etc. I feel myself locked up in this body and nothing more.

M.: It is right. Reality is only one and that is the self. All the rest are mere Phenomena in it, of it and by it. The seer, the objects and the sight, all are the self only. Can anyone see or hear, leaving the self aside? What difference does it make to see or hear anyone in close proximity or over enormous distance? The organs of sight and hearing are needed in both cases; so also the mind is required. None of them can be dispensed with in either case. There is dependence one way or another. Why then should there be a glamour about clairvoyance or clairaudience?

Moreover, what is acquired will also be lost in due course. They can never be permanent.

The only permanent thing is Reality; and *that* is the Self. You say "I am", "I am going", "I am speaking", "I am working", etc. Hyphenate "I am" in all of them. Thus I - AM. *That* is the abiding and fundamental Reality. This truth was taught by God to Moses: "I AM that I-AM". "Be still and know that I-AM God." so "I-AM" is God.

You know that you are. You cannot deny your existence at any moment of time. For you must be there in order to deny it. This (Pure Existence) is understood by stilling your mind. The mind is the outgoing faculty of the individual. If that is turned within, it becomes still in course of time and that "I-AM" alone prevails. "I-AM" is the whole Truth.

D.: I appreciate the whole answer.

M.: Who is there to appreciate what?

A question about Heart. Sri Bhagavan said: Leave alone the idea of *right* and *left*. They pertain to the body. The Heart is the Self. Realise it and then you will see for yourself. (Mr. Lorey thanked Sri Bhagavan and saluted him before retiring.)

18th August, 1938

Talk 504.

A visitor asked Sri Bhagavan about the 'over-mind', and 'super-mind', the 'Psychic', the 'Divine' of Sri Aurobindo's terminology.

M.: Realise the Self or the Divine. All these differences will disappear.

Talk 505.

Babu Rajendra Prasad said: I have come here with Mahatma Gandhiji's permission and I must return to him soon. Can Sri Bhagavan give me any message for him?

M.: Adhyatma sakti is working within him and leading him on. That is enough. What more is necessary?

19th August, 1938

Talk 506.

Explaining the opening stanza of *Sad Vidya*, Sri Bhagavan said: *Sat* (Being) is *Chit* (Knowledge Absolute); also *Chit* is *Sat*; what is, is only one. Otherwise the knowledge of the world and of one's own being will be impossible. It denotes both being and knowledge. However, both of them are one and the same. On the other hand, be it *Sat* only and not *Chit* also, such *Sat* will only be insentient (*jada*). In order to know it another *Chit* will be needed; such *Chit* being other than *Sat* cannot be. But it must be. Now taking *Chit* to be *Sat*, since *Sat* is *Jada*, *Chit* also becomes *jada* which is absurd. Again to know it another *Chit* is required, which is also absurd.

Therefore *Sat* and *Chit* are only one and the same.

22nd August, 1938

Talk 507.

An Arya Samajist from Bangalore with a companion visited Sri Maharshi. He asked: What is the use of yoga-practice? Is it for personal use or universal benefit?

M.: Yoga means union of two entities. What are they? Enquire. Use or benefit is in relation to some centre. What is it? Enquire.

D.: Should there be distinction of castes?

M.: Who is it that sees such distinction? Find it out.

D.: I find that it is observed in this Asramam. Probably without the approval of Sri Bhagavan others observe it here.

M.: Who are you that speak of others, etc.? Did you notice others, etc., in your *sushupti*?

D.: I am the individuality here. I may not see others in my sleep but I see them now.

M.: No doubt you do. But the one who sees now and the one who did not see in sleep are you only - the same individual. Why should you notice differences now and be troubled? Be as you were in sleep.

D.: That cannot be. I see it now whereas I do not see it in my sleep. That does not alter the existing state of affairs.

M.: Do the objects exist in the absence of the subject?

D.: Their existence is independent of the subject.

M.: Do you say that they exist, or do they come and announce their existence to you?

D.: I know that they exist.

M.: So it is your knowledge of them only. Their existence is not absolute.

D.: Even if I did not know they will continue to exist.

M.: Do you claim their existence in the absence of your knowledge of them? (Laughter).

D.: Brahman is equal to all. There cannot be any distinction there. Caste-distinction is against the highest principle.

M.: Why do you drag in Brahman? He has no grievances. Let him who has grievances pursue the matter.

D.: You are a Mahatma. You cannot admit castes. But how do the people here enforce such distinctions?

M.: Did I tell you that I am a *jnani* or a *mahatma*? You are saying it yourself. Nor did I make a grievance of this caste affair.

D.: Paramatma is the same in all.

M.: Why do you bring in all these names? They can take care of themselves. They do not require your help.

D.: Mahatma Gandhi also admits equality...

M.: Gandhi is not here.

D.: Aurobindo does not approve of castes. Do you approve of them?

M.: As for Aurobindo, you ask him. As for my opinion, how does it matter to you? How will it be of use to you? Have you got any opinion on the matter? That alone will affect you, not the opinion of others.

D.: I do not approve of the caste system. Mahatma's opinion is valuable as a guidance. I want your blessings in my attempts.

M.: Mahatma has told you to seek and find your Self. You will not do it but require his blessings.

D.: I am trying to follow the instructions. But caste-distinction is painful. It must go.

M.: To whom does it cause pain?

D.: The members of the society...

M.: It is you who say it. There are countries where there are no such distinctions of caste. Are they free from trouble? There are wars, internecine struggle, etc. Why do you not remedy the evils there?

D.: There are troubles here also.

M.: Differences are always there. There are not only human beings, but also animals, plants, etc. The state of affairs cannot be helped.

D.: We do not mind the animals, etc., at present.

M.: Why not? If they could speak they would claim equality with you and dispute your claims no less vigorously than human beings.

D.: But we cannot help it. It is God's work.

M.: If that is God's work then the other part is your work, is that so?

D.: It is man-made distinction.

M.: You need not notice these distinctions. There is diversity in the world. A unity runs through the diversity. The Self is the same in all. There is no difference in spirit. All the differences are external and superficial. You find out the Unity and be happy.

The pain of diversity is overcome by the joy of the perception of unity. Moreover, a king may disguise himself as a servant. That makes no difference in the person.

D.: I do not object to differences. But the claims of superiority are wrong.

M.: There are differences in the limbs of one's body. When the hand touches the foot the hand is not defiled. Each limb performs its function. Why do you object to differences?

D.: The people feel the injustice of caste distinction. It must be rooted out.

M.: You can individually arrive at the state where such distinctions are not perceived and be happy. How can you hope to reform the world? Even if you try you cannot succeed. Kavyakantha Ganapati Sastri offered to initiate Harijans with *mantras* and make Brahmins of them. But the Harijans did not come forward to accept the offer. That shows they are themselves afflicted by an inferiority complex. Remove that complex first before you try to reform others.

Moreover, why do you go to places where such distinctions are observed and cause pain to yourself? Why should you not seek places where they are not observed and be happy there?

Gandhiji also tries to bring about equality. He is also up against the barrier of inferiority complex afflicting the lower orders. He cannot enforce his views on others. He observes non-violence. So matters stand as they are.

D.: We must work to obliterate caste-distinctions.

M.: Then do it. If you have succeeded in the world, then see if the distinctions persist in this place.

D.: This must be the first place where I want to effect the reform.

M.: Why do you exert yourself so much to effect reforms? Go to sleep and see if there are differences. There you obliterate differences without any effort. (Laughter).

24th August, 1938

Talk 508.

An Indian I. C. S. Officer was in the hall for a few hours. He asked: "Can *ahimsa* put an end to wars in the world?" Sri Bhagavan did not answer and it was time to go out for the evening walk. The next day when someone else repeated the question, Sri Bhagavan said that the question contained its answer. It is patent that in a state of perfect *ahimsa* there can be no war.

26th August, 1938

Talk 509.

Mr. MacIver had an interview with Sri Bhagavan and spoke about *diksha*.

Sri Bhagavan asked: What is this *diksha*?

After a pause, He continued, "*Diksha* is of various kinds, by word, by sight, by touch and so forth."

D.: Bhagavan's is *mowna diksha*, is it not?

M.: Yes, this the highest form of *diksha*.

D.: Is it applicable to the *vichara marga* only?

M.: All the *margas* are included in the *vichara marga*.

D.: Yes, but if one wished to take them separately, it would not be applicable. Would it?

M.: No.

D.: Supposing one feels the need for aids to Realisation these are to be regarded as belonging to accessory *margas*. Are they not?

M.: Yes.

D.: And for these then other *dikshas* would be necessary.

M.: Yes.

D.: From this another question arises: So long as I am at Bhagavan's feet, I cannot be regarded as a faithful Christian.

Sri Bhagavan interrupted saying that this was the essence of Christianity.

D.: Yes, but not in the eyes of the present representatives of the Church. Accordingly I can no longer look to the side of the Church for aid.

Have I Bhagavan's leave to look elsewhere?

M.: That is left to you.

After a pause Sri Bhagavan spoke to the effect that people who come here are brought by some mysterious Power which will look to their needs. The conversation practically ended with this.

7th September, 1938

Talk 510.

Mr. T. K. S. Iyer read out a passage from a book which admitted of five different divisions of *antahkaranas* as follows: (1) *Ullam*, (2) mind, (3) intellect, (4) *chittam*, (5) ego.

Sri Bhagavan said: Four divisions are usual. The fifth item *ullam* has been brought in to correspond to five *tattvas* thus:

(1) *Ullam* (consciousness) is *akasa* (ether) *tattva* from the cranium to the brows.

(2) *Manas* (thinking faculty) is *vayu* (air) *tattva* from the brows to the throat.

(3) *Buddhi* (intellect) is *agni* (light) *tattva* from the throat to the heart.

(4) *Chitta* (memory) is *jala* (water) *tattva* from the heart to the navel, and,

(5) *Ahankar* (ego) is *prithvi* (earth) *tattva* from the navel to the coccyx.

Ullam is thus the pure mind or the mind in its pure being, *i.e.*, mind divested of all thoughts. It is the ether of mind corresponding to the expanse of mind without being crowded by thoughts.

When a person wakes up from sleep the head is raised and there is the light of awareness. This light was already there in the heart which is later reflected on the brain and appears as consciousness. But this is not particularised until *ahankar* steps in. In the undifferentiated state it is cosmic (cosmic mind or cosmic consciousness). This state lasts usually for a minute interval and passes off unnoticed. It becomes particularised or differentiated by the intrusion of the ego and the person says 'I'. This is always associated with an entity (here, the body). So the body is identified as 'I' and all else follows.

Because *ullam* is only the reflected light, it is said to be the moon. The original light is in the heart which is said to be the sun.

9th September, 1938

Talk 511.

Major Chadwick had translated *Na karmana na prajaya* ... into English. Sri Bhagavan was explaining its meaning. *Brahmaloka* may be interpreted subjectively or objectively. The latter meaning requires faith in the *sastras* which speak of such *lokas*, whereas the former meaning is purely of experience and requires no external authority. *Brahmaloka* would mean *Brahma jnana* (Knowledge of Brahman) or Self-Realisation (*Atma-Sakshatkara*). *Parantakala* as opposed to *aparantakala*. In the latter the *jivas* pass into oblivion to take other births. Their oblivion is enveloped in ignorance (*avidya*). *Para* is beyond the body. *Parantakala* is transcendence over the body, etc., *i.e., jnana* (knowledge). *Paramritat prakriteh* = beyond *prakriti*. *Sarve* implies that all are qualified for knowledge and liberation (*moksha*). *yatayah = yama niyama sametah sat purushah* = good men well disciplined. The whole passage implies passing into the real beyond the unreal.

na karmana na prajaya dhanena tyagenaike amritatvamanasuh
parena nakam nihitam guhayam, vibhrajate yadyatayo visanti
vedanta vijnana sunishchitarthah sanyasayogadyatayah shuddha satvah
te brahmaloke tu parantakale paramritat parimuchyanti sarve
dahram vipapam paravesmabhutum yat pundarikam puramadhya samstham
tatrapi dahram gaganam visokastasmin yadantastadupasitavyam
yo vedadau svarah prokto vedante cha pratishtitah tasya
prakritilinasya yah parah sa Mahesvarah

[Deathlessness is not obtained through action or begetting offspring or wealth. Some attain that state through renunciation.

The Sages (that have conquered the senses) attain that *Sat* which is more supreme than Heaven and shining all alone in the Heart.

The adepts who by renunciation and one-pointedness are pure in heart and have known the certainty of Truth by the special knowledge proclaimed by Vedanta, get fully released in the *Brahmaloka* from the causal *Maya* at the dissolution of the body.

That alone which shines as the tiny *Akasa* void of sorrow, in the lotus heart, the tiny seat of the spotless Supreme in the (inner) core of the body is worthy of worship.

He alone is the Supreme Lord, who is beyond the Primal Word which is the beginning and end of the Veda and in which merges the creative Cause].

Mr. T. K. S. Iyer later asked something about *muktaloka* (region of liberated souls). Sri Bhagavan said that it meant the same as *Brahmaloka*.

D.: Asked if some *sukshma tanu* (subtle body) such as *pranava tanu* or *suddha tanu* (*tanu* = body; *suddha* = pure) was required to gain such *loka*.

M.: Pranava means *real japa*. It is however interpreted to be *A, U, M, Nada* and *Bindu*. Of these, the first three are interpreted as *Visva, Taijasa, Prajna* and *Virat, Hiranyagarbha, Isvara, Nada* and *Bindu* correspond to *prana* and *manas* (mind).

The Mandukya Upanishad speaks of the three *matras* and *turiya matra*. The final meaning is that it represents the real state.

To a further question, Bhagavan answered: There are said to be *Panchapada Mahavakyani* (*mahavakyas* with five words) *e.g., Tattvamasi atinijam* ('you are that' is the great truth). The first three words have their *lakshya artha* (significance) all of which signify only the one Truth. So many efforts and so much discipline are said to be necessary for eradicating the non-existing *avidya*!

11th September, 1938

Talk 512.

Sri Bhagavan said: All mistake the mind-consciousness for Self-Consciousness. There is no mind in deep sleep; but no one denies his being in sleep. Even a child says on waking, "I slept well," and does not deny its existence. The 'I' rises up, the mind turns outward through the five senses and perceives objects, this they call direct perception. Asked if 'I' is not directly perceived, they get confused, because 'I' does not announce itself as an object in front and only the perception with the senses can be recognised by them as knowledge: this habit is

so strong with them. A stanza in *Thevaram* says: "O sages, eager to get over all misery, worry not about inferences and examples! Our Light is ever shining forth from within! With mind clear, live in God!"

This is direct perception. Will the common people admit it? They want God to appear in front of them as a bright Being mounted on a bull. Such a vision once originated must also end. It is therefore transient. *Thevaram* speaks of the Eternal and Ever-experienced Being. This *Thevaram* takes one directly to the Reality.

16th September, 1938

Talk 513.

Major Chadwick again gave his versified translation of the *mantra* for Sri Bhagavan to read. Sri Bhagavan softly spoke of the interpretation of the *Bhashyakara* and further explained the same. To consider the *Brahmaloka* as a region is also admissible. That is what the *pouraniks* say and many other schools also imply it by expounding *kramamukti* (liberation by degrees). But the Upanishads speak of *sadyomukti* (immediate liberation) as in *Na tasya prana utkramanti; ihaiva praleeyante* - the *pranas* do not rise up; they lose themselves here. So *Brahmaloka* will be Realisation of Brahman (*Brahmasakshatkara*). It is a state and not a region. In the latter case, *paramritat* must be properly understood. It is *para* inasmuch as *avyakrita* is the causal Energy transcending the universe, *amrita* because it persists until the Self is realised. So that *paramritat* will mean *avyakrita*. The *kramamukti* (liberation by degrees) school say that the *upasaka* goes to the region of his *Ishta Devata* which is *Brahmaloka* to him. The souls passing to all other *lokas* return to be reborn. But those who have gained the *Brahmaloka* do not. Moreover those desirous of a particular *loka* can by proper methods gain the same. Whereas *Brahmaloka* cannot be gained so long as there is any desire left in the person. Desirelessness alone will confer the *loka* on him. His desirelessness signifies the absence of the incentive for rebirth.

The age of Brahma is practically immeasurable. The presiding deity of the *loka* is said to have a definite period of life. When he passes away his *loka* also is dissolved. The inmates are emancipated at the

same time, irrespective of the different nature of individual consciousness in them prior to Self-realisation.

The *kramamukti* school objects to the idea of *sadyomukti* (immediate liberation) because the *jnani* is supposed to lose body-consciousness at the same time that ignorance is dispelled but he continues to live in the body. They ask, "How does the body function without the mind?" The answer is somewhat elaborate:

Knowledge (*jnana*) is not incompatible with ignorance (*ajnana*) because the Self in purity is found to remain along with ignorance-seed (*ajnana beeja*) in sleep. But the incompatibility arises only in the waking and dream states. *Ajnana* has two aspects: *avarana* (veiling) and *vikshepa* (multiplicity). Of these, *avarana* (veiling) denotes the veil hiding the Truth. That prevails in sleep. Multiplicity (*vikshepa*) is activity in different times. This gives rise to diversity and prevails in waking and dream states (*jagrat* and *svapna*). If the veil, *i.e*., *avarana* is lifted, the Truth is perceived. It is lifted for a *jnani* and so his *karana sarira* (causal body) ceases to exist. *Vikshepa* alone continues for him. Even so, it is not the same for a *jnani* as it is for an *ajnani*. The *ajnani* has all kinds of *vasanas*, *i.e., kartrtva* (doership) and *bhoktrtva* (enjoyership), whereas the *jnani* has ceased to be doer (*karta*). Thus only one kind of *vasana* obtains for him. That too is very weak and does not overpower him, because he is always aware of the *Sat-Chit-Ananda* nature of the Self. The tenuous *bhoktrtva vasana* is the only remnant of the mind left in the *jnani* and he therefore appears to be living in the body.

This explanation when applied to the *mantra* amounts to this: A *jnani* has his *karana sarira* destroyed; the *sthula sarira* (gross body) has no effect on him and is for all practical purposes destroyed too. The *sukshma sarira* (subtle body) alone remains. It is otherwise called *ativahika sarira*. It is this which is held by all persons after the physical body is given up. And with this they traverse to other *lokas* until another suitable physical body is taken. The *jnani* is supposed to move in *Brahmaloka* with this *sukshma sarira*. Then that is also dissolved and he passes to final Liberation.

The whole explanation is meant only for the onlooker. The *jnani* himself will never raise such questions. He knows by his experience that he is not bound by any kind of limitations.

D.: What is the 'final emancipation' according to the foregoing explanation?

M.: The *ativahika* or the *sukshma sarira* corresponds to the pure light which one experiences just after sleep and before the rise of the ego. It is Cosmic Consciousness. That is only the Light reflected from the Heart. When the reflection ceases and abides as the Original Light in the Heart it is final emancipation.

D.: But *Yoga Vasishtha* says that the *chitta* (mind) of a *jivanmukta* is *achala* (unchanging).

M.: So it is. *Achala chitta* (unchanging mind) is the same as *suddha manas* (pure mind). The *jnani's manas* is said to be *suddha manas*. The *Yoga Vasishtha* also says that *Brahman* is no other than the *jnani's* mind. So *Brahman* is *suddha manas* only.

D.: Will the description of *Brahman* as *Sat-Chit-Ananda* suit this *suddha manas*? For this too will be destroyed in the final emancipation.

M.: If *suddha manas* is admitted, the Bliss (*Ananda*) experienced by the *jnani* must also be admitted to be reflected. This reflection must finally merge into the Original. Therefore the *jivanmukti* state is compared to the reflection of a spotless mirror in another similar mirror. What will be found in such a reflection? Pure *Akasa* (Ether). Similarly, the *jnani's* reflected Bliss (*Ananda*) represents only the true Bliss.

These are all only words. It is enough that a person becomes *antarmukhi* (inward-bent). The *sastras* are not needed for an inward turned mind. They are meant for the rest.

Talk 514.

Mr. MacIver, a resident devotee, asked Sri Bhagavan if he might go to Switzerland where a Guru was inviting him. Sri Bhagavan said: Some Force brought him here and the same is taking him to Europe. Let him always remember that the world is only a projection of the mind, and the mind is in the Self. Wherever the body may move the mind must be kept under control. The body moves, but not the Self. The world is within the Self, that is all.

17th September, 1938

Talk 515.

D.: In the explanation given yesterday, it is said that the removal of *avarana* results in the annihilation of the *karana sarira*. That is clear. But how is the gross body considered to fall off too?

M.: The *vasanas* are of two kinds: *bandha hetu* (causing bondage) and *bhoga hetu* (only giving enjoyment). The *jnani* has transcended the ego and therefore all the causes of bondage are inoperative. *Bandha hetu* is thus at an end and *prarabdha* (past *karma*) remains as *bhoga vasana* (to give enjoyment) only. Therefore it was said that the *sukshma sarira* alone survives *jnana*. *Kaivalya* says that *sanchita* Karma (stored Karma) is at an end simultaneously with the rise of *jnana*; that *agami* (Karma now collecting) is no longer operative owing to the absence of the sense of bondage, and that *prarabdha* will be exhausted by enjoyment (*bhoga*) only. Thus the last one will end in course of time and then the gross body also falls away with it.

Sarira traya (the three bodies) and Karma *traya* (the three Karmas) are mere phrases meant for the delectation of debaters. A *jnani* is not affected by any of them.

An aspirant is instructed to find who he is. If he does so, he will take no interest in discussing such matters as the above. Find the Self and rest in Peace.

22nd September, 1938

Talk 516.

A question arose if the world is real or unreal, since it is claimed to be both by the *advaitins* themselves. Sri Bhagavan said that it is unreal if viewed as apart from the Self and real if viewed as the Self.

25th September, 1938

Talk 517.

There was some reference of two *slokas* in *Yoga Vasishtha* where spiritism in *mlechcha desa* is mentioned. Mr. MacIver said that black magic is more prevalent in the West than is ordinarily known to the observer. The writer then remembered how Mr. Paul Brunton had once said that he actually feared a woman for her association with black magic.

Sri Bhagavan asked if the gentleman had read *Devikalottaram*. He then said that *abhichara prayoga* (black magic) is condemned there. He also added that by such practices one compasses one's own ruin. *Avidya* (ignorance) is itself bad and makes one commit suicide. Why should black magic be also added to it?

D.: What is the *pratikriya* (remedy) open to the victim of black magic?

M.: Bhakti (devotion to God).

D.: Non-resistance seems to be the only remedy for all kinds of evil such as slander.

M.: Quite so. If one abuses another or injures him the remedy does not lie in retort or resistance. Simply keep quiet. This quiet will bring peace to the injured but make the offender restless until he is driven to admit his error to the injured party.

This black magic is said to have been used even against the greatest saints in India since time immemorial. The *tapasvis* of Daruka forest used it against Siva Himself.

Then the conversation turned on *Brahmaloka*.

Sri Bhagavan said *Brahmaloka* is the same as *Atmaloka*. Again *Brahmaiva lokah = Brahmalokah* (Brahma is Himself the region) and *Brahma* is *Atma*. So *Brahmaloka* is only the Self.

Loka, aloka are both synonymous. It is the same as *andamillakkan* in *Ulladu Narpadu*. *Lokyate iti lokah* (That which is seen is *loka*).

27th September, 1938

Talk 518.

Mr. V. Gupta, a Telugu Pandit, is on a visit here. Sri Bhagavan said in the course of conversation: *Ahamkriti* (the ego) is not the same as *aham*. The latter is the Supreme Reality whereas the former is the ego. It is to be overcome before the Truth is realised. The Supreme Being is unmanifest and the first sign of manifestation is *Aham Sphurana* (light of 'I'). The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says *Aham nama abhavat* (He became 'I' named). That is the original name of the Reality.

The Pandit asked about the operation of Grace. Is it the mind of the Guru acting on the mind of the disciple or anything different?

M.: The Highest Form of Grace is Silence (*mowna*). It is also the highest *upadesa*.

D.: Vivekananda has also said that silence is the loudest form of prayer.

M.: It is so, for the seeker's silence Guru's silence is the loudest *upadesa*. It is also Grace in its highest form. All other *dikshas* (initiations), *e.g., sparsa, chakshus* are derived from *mowna* (silence). They are therefore secondary. *Mowna* is the primary form. If the Guru is silent the seeker's mind gets purified by itself.

D.: Is it proper that one prays to God or Guru when one is afflicted by worldly ills?

M.: Undoubtedly.

Talk 519.

M.: The *mahavakyas* and their interpretation lead to interminable discussions and keep the minds of the seekers engaged externally. To turn the mind inward the man must directly settle down in the 'I'. Then there is an end of external activities and perfect Peace prevails.

Later, a passage from the *Yoga Vasishtha* was read out before Sri Bhagavan, indicating initiation by look and initiation by touch.

Sri Bhagavan observed: Dakshinamurti observed silence when the disciples approached Him. That is the highest form of initiation. It includes the other forms. There must be subject-object relationship established in the other *dikshas*. First the subject must emanate and then the object. Unless these two are there how is the one to look at the other or touch him? *Mowna diksha* is the most perfect; it comprises looking, touching and teaching. It will purify the individual in every way and establish him in the Reality.

Talk 520.

An Australian gentleman (Mr. Lowman) is on a visit here. He seems to be studying the Hindu system of Philosophy. He started saying that he believed in unity, the *jiva* is yet in illusion and so on.

M.: What is the unity you believe in? How can the *jiva* find a place in it?

D.: The Unity is the Absolute.

M.: The *jiva* cannot find a place in Unity.

D.: But the *jiva* has not realised the Absolute and imagines itself separate.

M.: Jiva is separate because it must exist in order to imagine something.

D.: But it is unreal.

M.: Any unreal thing cannot produce effects. It is like saying that you killed some animal with the horn of a hare. A hare does not grow horns.

D.: I see the absurdity. But I speak from the physical plane.

M.: You say, 'I'. Who is that 'I'? If that is found you can later say whose is the illusion.

A little later Sri Bhagavan asked:

You say you are in the physical plane now. In which plane are you in dreamless sleep?

D.: I think in the physical plane again.

M.: You say, "I think". That means that you are saying it now when you are awake. Anyway you admit that you exist in deep sleep. Don't you?

D.: Yes, but I did not function then.

M.: So then, you existed in deep sleep. You are the same one who continues to exist? Are you not?

D.: Yes.

M.: With this difference - that you did not function in your sleep. Rather you are associated with the thinking faculty in your waking state and you are dissociated from it in sleep. Is it not so?

D.: Yes.

M.: Which is then your real nature? Is it to be associated with thinking or to be dissociated?

D.: I see it now. But I was not aware of my being in sleep.

M.: You say so now. You do not say so in your sleep. Or do you deny your being (very existence in sleep)?

D.: No.

M.: It amounts to this that you exist in both states. The Absolute Existence is the Self. You are also conscious of the Existence. That Existence is also consciousness (*Sat* and *Chit*). That is your real nature.

D.: But thinking is necessary even for realisation.

M.: That thinking is aimed at the elimination of all thinking.

D.: Owing to my ignorance, I do not realise the Absolute Existence-Consciousness.

M.: Who is the 'I'? Whose is the ignorance! Answers to these questions will alone suffice to prove that you are already realised. Is there anyone who denies his own existence? Or can anyone say that he did not exist in his sleep? Pure Existence is thus admitted. The admission also implies consciousness. Thus all men are realised. There is no ignorant man at all.

D.: Yes, I understand. But I have a small question to ask. The state of Realisation is one of desirelessness. If a human being is desireless he ceases to be human.

M.: You admit your existence in sleep. You did not function then. You were not aware of any gross body. You did not limit yourself to this body. So you could not find anything separate from your Self.

Now in your waking state you continue to be the same Existence with the limitations of the body added. These limitations make you see other objects. Hence arises desire. But the state of desirelessness in sleep made you no less happy than now. You did not feel any want. You did not make yourself miserable by not entertaining desires. But now you entertain desires because you are limited to this human frame. Why do you wish to retain these limitations and continue to entertain desires?

Sri Bhagavan continued:

Does the body tell you that it is there? It is certainly something apart from the body that remains aware. What is it?

Do you say that it is the 'I', meaning the ego which arises simultaneously with the waking of the individual from sleep? Be it so. The body is not sentient. The Absolute does not speak. The ego does. One does not aspire for liberation in sleep. The aspiration arises only in the waking state. The functions of the waking state are those of the ego which is synonymous with the 'I'. Find out who this 'I' is. On doing so and abiding as 'I', all these doubts will be cleared up.

28th September, 1938

Talk 521.

Some Congressmen handed over the following questions to Maharshi:

1. How long is India destined to suffer bondage?

2. Have not the sons of India made enough sacrifice for her liberation?

3. Will India get freedom during Mahatma Gandhi's lifetime?

The above questions were not answered categorically. Sri Bhagavan simply remarked:

Gandhiji has surrendered himself to the Divine and works accordingly with no self-interest. He does not concern himself with the results but accepts them as they turn up. That must be the attitude of national workers.

Q.: Will the work be crowned with success?

M.: This question arises because the questioner has not surrendered himself.

Q.: Should we not then think of and work for the welfare of the country?

M.: First take care of yourself and the rest will naturally follow.

Q.: I am not speaking individually but for the country.

M.: First surrender and see. The doubts arise because of the absence of surrender. Acquire strength by surrender and then your surroundings will be found to have improved to the degree of strength acquired by you.

Q.: Should we not know if our actions will be worthwhile?

M.: Follow the example of Gandhiji in the work for the national cause. 'Surrender' is the word.

The following slip was also handed over to Sri Bhagavan:

"Four of us have come from Coorg and we had gone to Delhi to wait as a deputation on the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress and we are now going back. We are sent from the Coorg Congress Committee and so kindly give us some message to the Coorg District Congress Committee and the people of Coorg in general."

When this slip was handed over, Sri Bhagavan said that the same answer holds good here too. The message is contained in the word 'Surrender'.

29th September, 1938

Talk 522.

A visitor asked Sri Bhagavan: I want knowledge.

M.: Who wants knowledge?

D.: I want it.

M.: Who is that 'I'? Find the 'I' and see later what further knowledge is required.

2nd October, 1938

Talk 523.

A Pilgrims' special train brought several visitors from Bengal. One of them said that he had read Mr. Paul Brunton's book and since then he was anxious to see Sri Bhagavan. He also asked: How shall I overcome my passions?

M.: Find their root and then it will be easy. (Later) What are the passions? *Kama* (lust), *krodha* (anger), etc. Why do they arise? Because of likes and dislikes towards the objects seen. How do the objects project themselves in your view? Because of your *avidya*, *i.e.*, ignorance. Ignorance of what? Of the Self. Thus, if you find the Self and abide therein there will be no trouble owing to the passions.

(Later) Again, what is the cause of the passions? Desire to be happy or enjoy pleasure. Why does the desire for happiness arise? Because your nature is happiness itself and it is natural that you come into your own. This happiness is not found anywhere besides the Self. Do not look for it elsewhere. But seek the Self and abide therein.

Still again, that happiness which is natural is simply re-discovered, so it cannot be lost. Whereas the happiness arising from other objects are external and thus liable to be lost. Therefore it cannot be permanent and so it is not worth seeking.

Moreover craving for pleasures should not be encouraged. One cannot put out burning fire by pouring petrol over it. An attempt to satisfy your craving for the time being, so that the passion may later be suppressed, is simply foolish.

There are, no doubt, other methods for the suppression of passion. They are (1) regulated food, (2) fasting, (3) yoga practice, (4) medicines. But their effects are transitory. The passions reappear with greater force as soon as the check is removed. The only way to overcome them is to eradicate them. That is done by finding their source as stated above.

Talk 524.

Another pilgrim asked: I am a man with a family. Is it possible for those in a family to get release, and if so how?

M.: Now what is family? Whose family is it? If the answers to these questions are found the other questions solve themselves.

Tell me: Are you in the family, or is the family in you?

The visitor did not answer. Then Sri Bhagavan's answer was continued: Who are you? You include three aspects of life, namely, the waking, the dream and the sleep states. You were not aware of the family and their ties in your sleep and so these questions did not arise then. But now you are aware of the family and their ties and therefore you seek release. But you are the same person throughout.

D.: Because I now feel that I am in the family it is right that I should seek release.

M.: You are right. But consider and say: Are you in the family or is the family in you?

Another visitor interposed: What is family?

M.: That's it. It must be known.

D.: There is my wife and there are also my children. They are dependent on me. That is the family.

M.: Do the members of the family bind your mind? Or do you bind yourself to them? Do they come and say to you "We form your family. Be with us"? Or do you consider them as your family and that you are bound to them?

D.: I consider them as my family and feel bound to them.

M.: Quite so. Because you think that so-and-so is your wife and so-and-so are your children you also think that you are bound to them.

These thoughts are yours. They owe their very existence to you.

You can entertain these thoughts or relinquish them. The former is bondage and the latter is release.

D.: It is not quite clear to me.

M.: You must exist in order that you may think. You may think these thoughts or other thoughts. The thoughts change but not you. Let go the passing thoughts and hold on to the unchanging Self. The thoughts form your bondage. If they are given up, there is release. The bondage is not external. So no external remedy need be sought for release. It is within your competence to think and thus to get bound or to cease thinking and thus be free.

D.: But it is not easy to remain without thinking.

M.: You need not cease thinking. Only think of the root of the thoughts; seek it and find it. The Self shines by itself. When that is found the thoughts cease of their own accord. That is freedom from bondage.

D.: Yes. I understand it now. I have learnt it now. Is a Guru necessary?

M.: So long as you consider yourself as an individual, a Guru is necessary to show to you that you are not bound by limitations and that your nature is to be free from limitations.

Talk 525.

Another visitor asked: Actions are bondage. One cannot remain without some kind of activity. So bondage goes on increasing. What is one to do under the circumstances?

M.: One should act in such a manner that the bondage is not strengthened but gets weakened. That is selfless action.

3rd October, 1938

Talk 526.

A visitor asked Sri Bhagavan: People give some names to God and say that the name is sacred and repetitions of the name bestow merit on the individual. Can it be true?

M.: Why not? You bear a name to which you answer. But your body was not born with that name written on it, nor did it say to anyone that it bore such and such a name. And yet a name is given to you and you answer to that name, because you have identified yourself

with the name. Therefore the name signifies something and it is not a mere fiction. Similarly, God's name is effective. Repetition of the name is remembrance of what it signifies. Hence its merit.

But the man did not look satisfied. Finally he wanted to retire and prayed for Sri Bhagavan's Grace.

Sri Bhagavan now asked how mere sounds assuring him of Grace would satisfy him unless he had faith.

Both laughed and the visitor retired.

4th October, 1938

Talk 527.

A group of respectable Coorg ladies was in the hall.

One of them asked: I have received a *mantra*. People frighten me saying that it may have unforeseen results if repeated. It is only *Pranava*. So I seek advice. May I repeat it? I have considerable faith in it.

M.: Certainly, it should be repeated with faith.

D.: Will it do by itself? Or can you kindly give me any further instructions?

M.: The object of *mantra japa* is to realise that the same *japa* is already going on in oneself even without effort. The oral *japa* becomes mental and the mental *japa* finally reveals itself as being eternal. That *mantra* is the person's real nature. That is also the state of realisation.

D.: Can the bliss of *samadhi* be gained thus?

M.: The *japa* becomes mental and finally reveals itself as the Self. That is *samadhi*.

D.: Please show Grace to me and strengthen me in my efforts!

13th October, 1938

Talk 528.

A middle-aged Andhra man asked: "Is thought of God necessary for fixing one's sight (or making the mind one-pointed)?"

M.: What is the practice?

D.: To fix the look.

M.: What for?

D.: To gain concentration.

M.: The practice gives work for the eye right enough; but where is the work for the mind in the process?

D.: What should I do for it?

M.: Thought of God, certainly.

D.: Does the practice make one ill?

M.: Maybe. But all will be rightly adjusted of its own accord.

D.: I practised *dhyana* for four hours a day and fixation of sight for two hours. I became ill. Then others said that it was owing to my practice. So I gave up *dhyana*.

M.: Matters will adjust themselves.

D.: Is it not better that the gaze of the eye becomes fixed naturally?

M.: What do you mean?

D.: Is practice necessary to fix the gaze or is it better to leave it to happen of its own accord?

M.: What is practice if it is not an attempt to make something natural? It will become natural after long practice.

D.: Is *pranayama* necessary?

M.: Yes. It is useful.

D.: I did not practise it. But should I undertake it?

M.: Everything will be all right with sufficient strength of mind.

D.: How shall I get the strength of mind?

M.: By *pranayama*.

D.: Is food-regulation also necessary?

M.: It is certainly useful.

D.: Should my contemplation be on the Infinite or the limited being?

M.: What do you mean?

D.: May I contemplate on Sri Krishna or Sri Rama alternately?

M.: Bhavana implies *khanda i.e.*, division.

15th October, 1938

Talk 529.

In the course of conversation Sri Bhagavan said that Thirujnanasambandar had sung in praise of Sri Arunachala. He also mentioned the story briefly as follows:

Jnanasambandar was born in an orthodox family about 1,500 years ago. When he was three years old his father took him to the temple in Shiyali. He left the boy on the bank of the sacred tank and went in to bathe. As he dipped in the water the boy, not finding his father, began to cry out. Immediately Siva and Parvati appeared in a *vimana*. Siva told Parvati to feed the boy with her milk. So she drew out milk in a cup and handed it to the boy. He drank it and was happy.

The father as he came out of the water saw the boy smiling and with streaks of milk round his lips. So he asked the boy what happened to him. The boy did not answer. He was threatened and the boy sang songs. They were hymns in praise of Siva who appeared before him. He sang, "The One with ear-rings... the Robber, who robbed me of my mind...."

He thus became one of the most famous *bhaktas* and was much sought after. He led a vigorous and active life; went on pilgrimage to several places in South India. He got married in his sixteenth year. The bride and the bridegroom went to have *darsan* of God in the local temple soon after the marriage ceremonies were over. A large party went with them. When they reached the temple the place was a blaze of light and the temple was not visible. There was however a passage visible in the blaze of light. Jnanasambandar told the people to enter the passage. They did so. He himself went round the light with his young wife, came to the passage and entered it as the others had done earlier. The Light vanished leaving no trace of those who entered it. The temple again came into view as usual. Such was the brief but very eventful life of the sage.

In one of his tours he had come to Ariyanainallur or Tirukkoilur, eighteen miles from Tiruvannamalai. The place is famous for its Siva temple. (It was here that Sri Bhagavan had that vision of Light on his

way to Tiruvannamalai in his seventeenth year. Sri Bhagavan did not then know that the place was sanctified by the feet of Tirujnanasambandar some fifteen centuries ago.)

When the ancient sage was staying in Ariyanainallur an old man who carried a flower-basket came to him. The young sage asked the old man who he was. The latter replied that he was a servitor of Sri Arunachala the God residing as the Hill here.

Sage: How far is it from here?

The old man: I walk every day from there to here collecting flowers for daily worship. So it is only near.

Sage: Then I shall go with you to that place.

The old man: A rare pleasure, indeed, for me!

They went together, with a large crowd following the Sage. After walking some distance the Sage wanted to ask how much further the place was. But the old man had disappeared in the meantime. Soon after, a gang of dacoits waylaid the pilgrims who surrendered all that they had with them. They plodded their way and reached their destination. The young Sage fell into contemplation. God appeared and said that the dacoits were only His followers and that his needs would be met. Accordingly, the group of pilgrims found all their wants. The Sage had sung hymns in praise of Sri Arunachala. In one of the stanzas, he says:

"You are a dense mass of *jnana*, capable of removing the 'I-am-the-body' idea from Your devotees! Herds of gazelles, of boars and of bears come down Your slopes in the night to search for food on the plains. Herds of elephants go from the plains to Your slopes where they may rest. So different herds of animals meet on Your slopes."

Sri Bhagavan continued: So this Hill must have been a dense forest 1,500 years ago. It has since been denuded of the forests by the wood-cutters, etc., through these several centuries.

The account of Sri Arunachala given by the mysterious old man to Jnanasambandar is contained in 300 *slokas* in Upamanyu's *Bhakta Charita*. One of the Archakas of the temple had it with him and showed it to Sri Bhagavan on the occasion of the temple suit within the last few months. Sri Bhagavan copied the slokas.

Talk 530.

The following is taken from the diary of Annamalai Swami, a good devotee of Sri Bhagavan and resident of Sri Ramanasramam:

The Teachings of Sri Ramana Bhagavan.

(1) That man who is active in the world and yet remains desireless, without losing sight of his own essential nature, is alone a true man.

This was in answer to the Swami who wanted to retire into a cave for practising meditation.

(2) He asked about *sannyas*. Should not a man renounce everything in order that he might get Liberation?

M.: Even better than the man who thinks "I have renounced everything" is the one who does his duty but does not think "I do this" or "I am the doer". Even a *sannyasi* who thinks "I am a *sannyasi*" cannot be a true *sannyasi*, whereas a householder who does not think "I am a householder" is truly a *sannyasi*.

Talk 531.

D.: One person says one thing one way. Another says the same thing in a different way. How is the truth to be ascertained?

M.: Each one sees his own Self only, always and everywhere. He finds the world and God according to what he is.

A Nayanar went to Kalahasti for the *darsan* of God. He saw all the people there as Siva and Sakti because he himself was so. Again, Dharmaputra considered that the whole world was composed of people having some merit or other and that each of them was even better than he himself for some reason or other. Whereas Duryodhana could not find even a single good person in the world. Each reflects his own nature.

Talk 532.

D.: Is there no way of escape from the miseries of the world?

M.: There is only one way and that consists in not losing sight of one's Self under any circumstances.

To enquire "Who am I?" is the only remedy for all the ills of the world. It is also perfect bliss.

Talk 533.

Soon after the announcement in the newspapers that Gandhiji was going to fast for twenty-one days in Yerwada jail, two young men came to Sri Bhagavan; they were very excited.

They said "Mahatma is now fasting for twenty-one days. We want permission from Sri Bhagavan to run up to Yerwada so that we may also fast as long as he does. Please permit us. We are in a haste to go." Saying so they made ready to rush out.

Sri Bhagavan smiled and said, "It is a good sign that you have such feelings. But what can you do now? Get the strength which Gandhiji has already got by his *tapasya*. You will afterwards succeed."

Talk 534.

Sri Bhagavan often used to say, "*Mowna* is the utmost eloquence. Peace is utmost activity. How? Because the person remains in his essential nature and so he permeates all the recesses of the Self. Thus he can call up any power into play whenever or wherever it is necessary. That is the highest *siddhi*."

Annamalai asked: Namadev, Tukaram, Tulsidas and others are said to have seen Maha Vishnu. How did they see Him?

M.: In what manner? Just in the same manner as you see me now and I see you here. They would also have seen Vishnu in this way only.

(He records that, on hearing it, his hairs stood on end and an intense joy overpowered him.)

Talk 535.

Once 'A' asked: How can one be worshipful while engaged in daily work?

Sri Bhagavan did not reply. Ten minutes passed. A few girls came for *darsan* of Sri Bhagavan. They began to sing and dance. Their song was to the effect: "We will churn the milk without losing thought of Krishna."

Sri Bhagavan turned to the Swami and said that there was the reply to his question.

This state is called *Bhakti*, Yoga and Karma.

Talk 536.

The person soaked in the "I-am-the-body" idea is the greatest sinner and he is a suicide. The experience of "I-am-the-Self" is the highest virtue. Even a moment's *dhyana* to that effect is enough to destroy all the *sanchita* Karma. It works like the sun before whom darkness is dispelled. If one remains always in *dhyana*, can any sin, however heinous it be, survive his *dhyana*?

Talk 537.

Once Sri Bhagavan said, "Desire constitutes *maya*, and desirelessness is God."

Talk 538.

'A' asked: What is the exact difference between worldly activity and *dhyana*?

M.: There is no difference. It is like naming one and the same thing by two different words in two different languages. The crow has two eyes but only one iris which is rolled into either eye as it pleases. The trunk of an elephant is used for breathing and for drinking water. The snake sees and hears with the same organ.

Talk 539.

When Sri Bhagavan was going up the hill, the Swami asked: Does the closing or the opening of the eyes make any difference during *dhyana*?

M.: If you strike on a wall with a rubber-ball and you stand at a distance, the ball rebounds and runs back to you. If you stand near the wall, the ball rebounds and runs away from you. Even if the eyes are closed, the mind follows thoughts.

Talk 540.

Once 'A' asked: There is more pleasure in *dhyana* than in sensual enjoyments. Yet the mind runs after the latter and does not seek the former. Why is it so?

M.: Pleasure or pain are aspects of the mind only. Our essential nature is happiness. But we have forgotten the Self and imagine that the body or the mind is the Self. It is that wrong identity that gives rise to

misery. What is to be done? This *vasana* is very ancient and has continued for innumerable past births. Hence it has grown strong. That must go before the essential nature, *viz.*, happiness, asserts itself.

Talk 541.

A certain visitor asked Sri Bhagavan:

There is so much misery in the world because wicked men abound in the world. How can one find happiness here?

M.: All are gurus to us. The wicked say by their evil deeds, "Do not come near me". The good are always good. So then, all persons are like gurus to us.

Talk 542.

'A' asked: I often desire to live in solitude where I can find all I want with ease, so that I may devote all my time to meditation only. Is such a desire good or bad?

M.: Such thoughts will bestow a *janma* (reincarnation) for their fulfilment. What does it matter where and how you are placed? The essential point is that the mind must always remain in its source. There is nothing external which is not also internal. The mind is all. If the mind is active even solitude becomes like a market place. There is no use closing your eyes. Close the mental eye and all will be right. The world is not external to you. The good persons will not care to make plans previous to their actions. Why so? For God who has sent us into the world has His own plan and that will certainly work itself out.

Talk 543.

Many visitors came on one occasion and they all saluted Sri Bhagavan with the single prayer, "Make me a *bhakta*. Give me *moksha*." After they left Sri Bhagavan said, thinking aloud: All of them want *bhakti* and *moksha*. If I say to them, 'Give yourself to me' they will not. How then can they get what they want?

Talk 544.

On one occasion a few devotees were discussing among themselves the relative merits of some famous *bhaktas*. They did not agree among themselves and referred the matter to Sri Bhagavan. He remained silent. The discussion grew hot.

Finally Sri Bhagavan said: One cannot know about another nor can confer bondage or release on another. Each one desires to become famous in the world. It is natural for man. But that desire alone does not bring about the end in view. He who is not accepted by God is certainly humiliated. He who has surrendered himself, body and mind, to God becomes famous all over the world.

Talk 545.

'A' was once badly distracted by sexual thoughts.

He fought against them. He fasted three days and prayed to God so that he might be free from such thoughts. Finally, he decided to ask Sri Bhagavan about it.

Sri Bhagavan listened to him and remained silent for about two minutes. Then He said: Well, the thoughts distracted you and you fought against them. That is good. Why do you continue to think of them now? Whenever such thoughts arise, consider to whom they arise and they will flee away from you.

Talk 546.

'A' asked: A person does something good but he sometimes suffers pain even in his right activities. Another does something wicked but is also happy. Why should it be so?

M.: Pain or pleasure is the result of past Karma and not of the present Karma. Pain and pleasure alternate with each other. One must suffer or enjoy them patiently without being carried away by them. One must always try to hold on to the Self. When one is active one should not care for the results and must not be swayed by the pain or pleasure met with occasionally. He who is indifferent to pain or pleasure can alone be happy.

Talk 547.

D.: What is the significance of Guru's Grace in the attainment of liberation?

M.: Liberation is not anywhere outside you. It is only within. If a man is anxious for Deliverance, the Guru within pulls him in and the Guru without pushes him into the Self. This is the Grace of the Guru.

Talk 548.

A visitor asked Sri Bhagavan (in writing) the following questions: (1) Were the differences in the world simultaneous, with creation? Or are they of later growth? (2) Is the Creator impartial? Then why is one born lame, another blind, and so on? (3) Are the eight Dikpalas, thirty-three crores of gods and the seven *rishis* existent even today?

M.: Refer these questions to yourself and the answer will be found.

After a pause, Sri Bhagavan continued: if we first know our Self then all other matters will be plain to us. Let us know our Self and then enquire concerning the Creator and creation. Without first knowing the Self, to seek knowledge of God, etc., is ignorance. A man suffering from jaundice sees everything yellow. If he tells others that all things are yellow who will accept his statement?

The creation is said to have an origin. How? Like a tree and the seed from which it has grown. How was the seed produced? From a similar tree. Where is the end to the series of questions? Therefore one must know one's Self before the world is known.

Talk 549.

Sri Bhagavan often speaks of *namaskar* (prostration) in the following strain: "This *namaskar* was originally meant by the ancient sages to serve as a means of surrender to God. The act still prevails but not the spirit behind it. The doer of *namaskar* intends to deceive the object of worship by his act. It is mostly insincere and deceitful. It is meant to cover up innumerable sins. Can God be deceived? The man thinks that God accepts his *namaskar* and that he himself is free to continue his old life. They need not come to me. I am not pleased with these *namaskars*. The people should keep their minds clean; instead of that they bend themselves or lie prostrate before me. I am not deceived by such acts."

Talk 550.

Somerset Maugham, a well-known English author, was on a visit to Sri Bhagavan. He also went to see Maj. Chadwick in his room and there he suddenly became unconscious. Maj. Chadwick requested Sri Bhagavan to see him. Sri Bhagavan went into the room, took a seat and gazed on Mr. Maugham. He regained his senses and saluted Sri

Bhagavan. They remained silent and sat facing each other for nearly an hour. The author attempted to ask questions but did not speak. Maj. Chadwick encouraged him to ask. Sri Bhagavan said, "All finished. Heart-talk is all talk. All talk must end in silence only." They smiled and Sri Bhagavan left the room.

Talk 551.

A man asked Sri Bhagavan: "How is it that *Atma vidya* is said to be the easiest?"

M.: Any other *vidya* requires a knower, knowledge and the object to be known, whereas this does not require any of them. It is the Self. Can anything be so obvious as that? Hence it is the easiest. All that you need do is to enquire, "Who am I?"

A man's true name is *mukti* (liberation)

Talk 552.

There are some buildings in the Asramam. They used to have some plan which somehow could not be followed in entirety. Therefore 'A' and the Sarvadhikari did not agree on many details and there used to be trouble between them. 'A' was once highly disgusted with the state of affairs. He asked Sri Bhagavan what could be done under the circumstances.

Sri Bhagavan said: "Which of the buildings was according to a plan made by these people here? God has His own plans and all these go on according to that. No one need worry as to what happens."

Talk 553.

The Asramites once asked Sri Bhagavan, "How were we all in our previous births? Why do we not know our own past?"

M.: God in His mercy has withheld this knowledge from people. If they knew that they were virtuous, they will grow proud; contrariwise they will be depressed. Both are bad. It is enough that one knows the Self.

Talk 554.

M.: Just as a river does not continue its flow after its discharge into the ocean, so also a person loses all movements after he merges in the Self.

Talk 555.

Sri Bhagavan once recounted how Kavyakantha Ganapathi Muni asked Him: My own opinion is that a man can live on Rs. 3 a month. What is Sri Bhagavan's opinion in the matter?

M.: A man can live happily only if he knows that he requires nothing wherewith to live.

Talk 556.

Maj. Chadwick asked Sri Bhagavan one night: The world is said to become manifest after the mind becomes manifest. There is no mind when I sleep. Is the world not existent to others at that time? Does it not show that the world is the product of a universal mind? How then shall we say that the world is not material but only dream-like?

M.: The world does not tell you that it is of the individual mind or of the universal mind. It is only the individual mind that sees the world. When this mind disappears the world also disappears.

There was a man who saw in his dream his father who had died thirty years earlier. Furthermore he dreamt that he had four more brothers and that his father divided his property among them. A quarrel ensued, the brothers assaulted the man and he woke up in a fright. Then he remembered that he was all alone, he had no brothers and the father was dead long ago. His fright gave place to contentment. So you see - when we see our Self there is no world, and when we lose sight of the Self we get ourselves bound in the world.

Talk 557.

A visitor asked: "We are advised to concentrate on the spot in the forehead between the eyebrows. Is it right?"

M.: Everyone is aware, 'I am'. Leaving aside that awareness one goes about in search of God. What is the use of fixing one's attention between the eyebrows? It is mere folly to say that God is between the eyebrows. The aim of such advice is to help the mind to concentrate. It is one of the forcible methods to check the mind and prevent its dissipation. It is forcibly directed into one channel. It is a help to concentration.

But the best means of realisation is the enquiry "Who am I?" The present trouble is to the mind and it must be removed by the mind only.

D.: Are there restrictions to be observed in food?

M.: Sattva food taken in moderation.

D.: There are several *asanas* mentioned. Which of them is the best?

M.: Nididhyasana (one-pointedness of the mind) is the best.

Talk 558.

A visitor asked: "Sri Bhagavan! When I heard of you, a strong desire arose in me to see you. Why should it be so?"

M.: The desire arose in the same way as the body arises to the Self.

D.: What is the purpose of life?

M.: To seek to know the significance of life is itself the result of good karma in past births. Those who do not seek such knowledge are simply wasting their lives.

Talk 559.

A man asked Sri Bhagavan: "Sri Bhagavan can know when I shall become a *jnani*. Please tell me when it will be."

M.: If I am Bhagavan then there is no one apart from me to whom *jnana* should arise or to whom I should speak. If I am an ordinary man like others then I am as ignorant as the rest. Either way your question cannot be answered.

Talk 560.

When Sri Bhagavan was taking His bath a few *bhaktas* were around Him, speaking to themselves. Then they asked Him about the use of *ganja* (hashish). Sri Bhagavan had finished His bath by that time. He said: "Oh *ganja*! The users feel immensely happy when they are under its influence. How shall I describe their happiness! They simply shout *ananda! ananda* ..." Saying so, He walked as if tipsy. The *bhaktas* laughed. He appeared as if He stumbled, placed His hands round 'A' and cried "*ananda! ananda!*"

'A' records that his very being was transformed from that time. He had remained an inmate for the past eight years. He further says that his mind now remains at peace.

Talk 561.

D.: What is *svarupa* (form) and *arupa* (formless) of the mind?

M.: When you wake up from sleep a light appears, that is the light of the Self passing through *Mahat tattva*. It is called cosmic consciousness. That is *arupa*. The light falls on the ego and is reflected therefrom. Then the body and the world are seen. This mind is *svarupa*. The objects appear in the light of this reflected consciousness. This light is called *jyoti*.

21st October, 1938

Talk 562.

There is a statement in the book *Vichara Sangraha* that though a person realises the Self once, he cannot, for that simple reason alone, become a *mukta*. He continues to remain a victim of *vasanas* (latencies). Sri Bhagavan was asked whether the realisation referred to was the same as the *jnani's*, and if so why there should be a difference in their effects.

M.: The experience is the same. Every person experiences the Self consciously or unconsciously. The *ajnani's* experience is clouded by his latencies whereas the *jnani's* is not so. The *jnani's* experience of the Self is therefore distinct and permanent.

A practiser may by long practice gain a glimpse of the Reality. This experience may be vivid for the time being. And yet he will be distracted by the old *vasanas* and so his experience will not avail him. Such a man must continue his *manana* and *nididhyasana* so that all the obstacles may be destroyed. He will then be able to remain permanently in the Real State.

D.: What is the difference between a man who makes no attempts and remains an *ajnani*, and another who gains a glimpse and returns to *ajnana*?

M.: In the latter case a stimulus is always present to goad him on to further efforts until the realisation is perfect.

D.: The *Srutis* say: *Sakrit vibhatoyam brahmaloka* (This knowledge of Brahman shines forth once and forever).

M.: They refer to the permanent realisation and not to the glimpse.

D.: How is it possible that a man forgets his very experience and falls back into ignorance?

Sri Bhagavan illustrated it with the following story:

There was a king who treated his subjects well. One of his ministers gained his confidence and misused the influence. All the other ministers and officers were adversely affected and they hit upon a plan to get rid of him. They instructed the guards not to let the man enter the palace. The king noted his absence and enquired after him. He was informed that the man was taken ill and could not therefore come to the palace. The king deputed his physician to attend on the minister. False reports were conveyed to the king that the minister was sometimes improving and at other times collapsing. The king desired to see the patient. But the pandits said that such an action was against *dharma*. Later the minister was reported to have died. The king was very sorry when he heard the news.

The arrogant minister was kept informed of all the happenings by spies of his own. He tried to foil the other ministers. He waited for the king to come out of the palace so that he might report himself to the king. On one occasion he climbed up a tree, hid himself among the branches and awaited the king. The king came out that night in the palanquin and the man in hiding jumped down in front of the palanquin and shouted his identity. The companion of the king was equally resourceful. He at once took out a handful of sacred ashes (*vibhuti*) from his pocket and scattered it in the air so that the king was obliged to close his eyes. The companion shouted victory ('*jai*') to the king and ordered the band to play so that the other man's shout was drowned in the noise. He also ordered the palanquin-bearers to move fast and he himself sang incantations to keep off evil spirits. The king was thus left under the impression that the dead man's ghost was playing pranks with him.

The disappointed man became desperate and retired into the forest for *tapasya* (austerities). After a long time the king happened to go hunting. He came across the former minister seated in deep contemplation. But he hastened away from the spot lest the ghost should molest him.

The moral of the story is that even though the man was seen in flesh and blood, yet the wrong notion that he was a ghost prevented right values being taken. So it is with a forced realisation of the Self.

22nd October, 1938

Talk 563.

A group of people came on a visit to Sri Bhagavan. One of them asked: "How can I keep my mind aright?"

M.: A refractory bull is lured to the stall by means of grass. Similarly the mind must be lured by good thoughts.

D.: But it does not remain steady.

M.: The bull accustomed to stray takes delight in going astray. However he must be lured with luscious grass to the stall. Even so he will continue to trespass into the neighbour's fields. He must gradually be made to realise that the same kind of good grass can be had in his own place. After a time he will remain in the stall without straying. Later a time will come when, even if driven out of the stall, he will return to the stall without going into the neighbouring fields. So also the mind must be trained to take to right ways. It will gradually grow accustomed to good ways and will not return to wrong ways.

D.: What are the good ways to be shown to the mind?

M.: Thought of God.

23rd to 26th October, 1938

Talk 564.

Pandit Bala Kak Dhar, a jagirdar from Kashmir, had come all the way from Srinagar to have *darshan* of Sri Bhagavan on Deepavali Day. He gave a bundle of papers to Sri Bhagavan containing an account of his life and position. His talks with Sri Bhagavan were all of them personal.

One of his questions was: "Now that I have had the *darshan* of Sri Bhagavan and it is enough for me, may I throw away all the charms, *tantras* and *pujas* into the river?"

M.: Daily *puja* as prescribed in the *Dharma sastras* is always good. It is for the purification of the mind. Even if one feels oneself too advanced to need such *puja*, still it must be performed for the sake of others. Such action will be an example to one's children and other dependents.

Talk 565.

A gentleman from Mysore asked: How is the mind to be kept in the right way?

M.: By practice. Give it good thoughts. The mind must be trained in good ways.

D.: But it is not steady.

M.: The Bhagavad Gita says: *Sanaissanairuparamet* (The mind must gradually be brought to a standstill); *Atma samstham manah krtva* (making the mind inhere in the Self); *Abhyasa-vairagyabhyam* (by practice and dispassion).

Practice is necessary. Progress will be slow.

D.: What is the Self referred to in *Atma samstham* (fixing it in the Self)?

M.: Do you not know your Self? You certainly exist. Or do you deny your existence? The question may arise "Who is this Self", only if you do not exist, but you cannot ask anything unless you exist at the same time. Your question shows that you exist. Find out who you are. That is all.

D.: I have read many books. But my mind does not turn to the Self.

M.: Because the Self is not in the books; but it is in you. Reading books makes one learned. That is its purpose and it is fulfilled.

D.: What is Atma *sakshatkara* (Self-Realisation)?

M.: You are the Atma (Self) and that *sakshat* (here and now) also. Where is the place for *kara* (accomplishment) in it? This question shows that you think you are the non-Self. Or you think that there are two selves, the one to realise the other. It is absurd.

That you identify yourself with the gross body lies at the root of this question. Well, this question arises now. Did it arise in your sleep? Did you not exist then? Certainly you did exist in sleep. What is the difference between these two states that the question should arise now but not in sleep? Now you think that you are the body. You see things around you and you want to see the Self in a similar manner. Such is the force of habit. The senses are mere instruments of perception. *You* are the seer. Remain as the seer only. What else is there to see? Such is the state in deep sleep.

Therefore this question does not arise then.

Atma *sakshatkara* (Self-Realisation) is thus only *anatma nirasana* (giving up the non-Self).

D.: Is there only one Self or are there more selves?

M.: This is again due to confusion; you identify the body with the Self. You think: "Here I am; here he is, there is another; and so on". You find many bodies and think they are so many selves. But did you ask in your sleep "I am sleeping here, how many are there who are awake?" Does any question arise, for the matter of that? Why does it not arise? Because you are only one and there are not many.

D.: What is my *tattva* (truth)?

M.: You are yourself the *tattva*. Is there a different one to know the *tattva* of another? How can you exist apart from the *tattva*? The very fact of your existence makes you ask this question. Your very existence is the *tattva*. Give up the habiliments of the *tattva* and remain in your essential nature. All the Scriptures tell you only not to waste your efforts in non-truth - non-*tattva*. Give up the non-*tattva*. Then *tattva* remains always shining pure and single.

D.: I want to know my *tattva* and my duties.

M.: Know your *tattva* first and then you may ask what your duties are. You must exist in order to know and do your duty. Realise your existence and then enquire of your duties.

26th October, 1938

Talk 566.

There is a Tamil paper *Arya Dharmam*. An article on *Vairagyam* appeared in it. Sri Bhagavan read it out in answer to a question. The article was briefly as follows:

vairagya = vi + raga = vigataraga (non-attachment).

Vairagya is possible only for the wise. However, it is often misapplied by the common folk. For instance, a man often says "I have determined not to go to cinema shows." He calls it *vairagya*. Such wrong interpretation of the words and old sayings are not uncommon.

Again we often hear, "Dog seen, stone is not seen; stone seen, dog is not seen." It is ordinarily understood to mean that one cannot find a brickbat to throw at a stray dog. But this popular saying has a much deeper significance. It is based on a story:

A certain wealthy man's house was closely guarded. It had also a ferocious dog chained to a pillar at the gate. The dog and the chain were however very skilful pieces of art. They were sculptured in stone but appeared life-like. A pedestrian on the road once took fright at the sight of the ferocious animal and hurt himself in his attempt to dodge it. A kindly neighbour took pity on him and showed him that it was not a living dog. When the man passed by it the next time he admired the skill of the sculptor and forgot his old experience. Thus when he found it to be a dog, he could not see the stone of which it was made; and again when he found it a piece of sculpture he did not see any dog to hurt him. Hence the proverb. Compare it with 'The elephant hides the wood and the wood hides the elephant.' Here it is a wooden elephant.

Atma is always *Sat-Chit-Ananda*. Of these, the first two are experienced in all the states, whereas the last one is said to be experienced in sleep only.

The question arises how the true nature of the Self can be lost in the waking and dream states. It is, really speaking, not lost. In sleep there is no mind and the Self shines as Itself, whereas in the other two states what shines forth is the reflected light of the Self. *Ananda* is felt after the cessation of thoughts in sleep. It is also manifest on other occasions as love, joy, etc., *priya, moda* and *pramoda*. But they are all *chitta vrittis* (modes of mind).

When a man is walking in the street his mind is full of fleeting thoughts. Suppose he passes a bazaar where some fine mangoes are for sale. He likes the mangoes and purchases them. He is next anxious to taste them. So he hastens home and eats them and feels happy. When the fleeting thoughts give way to the pleasure at the sight of mangoes, it is *priya*, when he gets them as his own, the pleasure is *moda*; lastly, when he eats them, the pleasure is *pramoda*.

All the three kinds of pleasure are owing to the disappearance of other thoughts.

Talk 567.

Sri Bhagavan explained to Mr. MacIver the first few stanzas of *Sad Vidya* as follows:

1. The first stanza is the auspicious beginning. Why should the subject-matter of the piece be brought in here? Can knowledge be other than Being? Being is the core - the Heart. How then is the Supreme Being to be contemplated and glorified? Only to remain as the Pure Self is the auspicious beginning. This speaks of attributeless Brahman according to the *jnana marga* (method of knowledge).

2. The second stanza is in praise of God with attributes. In the foregoing, to be as one Self is mentioned; in the present one, surrender to the Lord of all.

Furthermore the second indicates (1) the fit reader (2) the subject-matter (3) the relationship and (4) the fruit. The fit reader is the one who is competent for it. Competence consists in non-attachment to the world and desire to be liberated.

All know that they must die some time or other; but they do not think deeply of the matter. All have a fear of death: such fear is momentary. Why fear death? Because of the 'I-am-the-body' idea. All are fully aware of the death of the body and its cremation. That the body is lost in death is well-known. Owing to the I-am-the-body notion, death is feared as being the loss of Oneself. Birth and death pertain to the body only; but they are superimposed on the Self, giving rise to the delusion that birth and death relate to the Self.

In the effort to overcome birth and death man looks up to the Supreme Being to save him. Thus are born faith and devotion to the Lord. How to worship Him? The creature is powerless and the Creator is All-powerful. How to approach Him? To entrust oneself to His care is the only thing left for him; total surrender is the only way. Therefore he surrenders himself to God. Surrender consists in giving up oneself and one's possessions to the Lord of Mercy. Then what is left over for the man? Nothing - neither himself nor his possessions. The body liable to be born and to die having been made over to the Lord, the man need no

longer worry about it. Then birth and death cannot strike terror. The cause of fear was the body; it is no longer his; why should he fear now? Or where is the identity of the individual to be frightened?

Thus the Self is realised and Bliss results. This is then the subject-matter: freedom from misery and gain of Happiness. This is the highest good to be gained. Surrender is synonymous with Bliss itself. This is the relationship.

Fruit is to reflect on the subject-matter and gain Knowledge which is ever-present, here and now. The stanza ends with "the immortal ones."

3. The five senses mean the subtle functions (*tanmatras*), namely, hearing, touch, seeing, taste and smell. Variations of these form the whole universe; they vary according to the three *gunas* as follows:

by *tamas* (dullness) the gross elements;
by *rajas* (activity) the instruments for knowing objects;
by *sattva* (clearness) the different kinds of knowledge of the senses; also
by *tamas* - the gross objects *i.e*., the world;
by *rajas* - the vital airs and the *karmendriyas*
by *sattva* - the sense organs of perception (*jnanendriyas*).

Karmendriyas are organs of holding, walking, speech, evacuation and reproduction.

Now consider the ringing of the bell; the sound is related to hearing; the bell is the object, the modification of *tamoguna*. The *rajasic tanmatras*, changing as the vibrations of sound, extend round the bell, then as ether get connected with the ear in order to be felt as sound. The knowledge recognising it as sound is the *sattva tanmatra*.

So also the other senses: Touch (*vayu*) - air *tanmatra*; form (*rupa*) - *tejas tanmatra*; taste (*ap*) - water *tanmatra*; smell (*prithvi*) - earth *tanmatra*.

To understand the *tanmatras* as the subtlest particles of matter is not right, for it is incomplete. They are only the subtle forms of sound, touch, sight, taste and smell, which form the whole components of the universe. Such is the creation of the world.

For want of proper terminology these ideas cannot be rightly expressed in foreign languages.

4. This stanza says that all are agreed on one point. What is it? The state beyond duality and non-duality, beyond subject and object, beyond *jiva* and God, in short, beyond all differences. It is free from ego. "How to reach it?" is the question. By giving up the world, it says. Here "the world" stands for thoughts relating to it. If such thoughts do not arise, the ego does not rise up. There will be no subject nor object. Such is the state.

Talk 568.

Mr. V. G. Sastri showed a cutting to Sri Bhagavan. It contained some prophecy of Sri Rama Tirtha that India would reach the full height of her former glory before 1950 AD

Sri Bhagavan said: Why should we think that India is not already in the height of her glory? The glory is in your thought.

7th November, 1938

Talk 569.

In reply to Sri K. L. Sarma, Sri Bhagavan spoke about *Dakshinamurti stotra* as follows:

I originally intended to write a commentary on it. Mr. Ranganatha Iyer took away my Tamil version of the *stotra* and printed it along with *Appalapattu*. He later asked me to enlarge it. I had the introduction ready. He saw it and took it away for printing. I did not proceed with the work. As for the *stotra:*

Brahma, the creator, created four sons from his mind. They were Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanathkumara and Sanatsujata. They asked their creator why they were brought into existence. Brahma said: "I must create the universe. But I want to go to do *tapas* for realising the Self. You are brought forth in order that you may create the universe. That will be by multiplying yourselves." They did not like the idea. They wondered why they should take the trouble on themselves. It is natural for one to seek the source. They therefore wanted to regain their source and be happy. So they did not obey the commands of Brahma but left him. They desired guidance for realisation of the Self. They were the best equipped individuals for Self-Realisation. Guidance should be only from the best of Masters. Who could it be but Siva - the *yogiraja*. Siva appeared before them sitting under the sacred banyan tree. Being *yogiraja*

should He practise yoga? He went into *samadhi* as He sat; He was in Perfect Repose. Silence prevailed. They saw Him. The effect was immediate. They fell into *samadhi* and their doubts were at an end.

Silence is the true *upadesa*. It is the perfect *upadesa*. It is suited only for the most advanced seeker. The others are unable to draw full inspiration from it. Therefore they require words to explain the Truth. But Truth is beyond words. It does not admit of explanation. All that is possible to do is only to indicate It. How is that to be done?

The people are under an illusion. If the spell is removed they will realise the Truth. They must be told to realise the falsity of the illusion. Then they will try to escape its snares. *Vairagya* will result. They will enquire into the Truth, *i.e*., seek the Self. That will make them abide as the Self. Sri Sankara, being the *avatar* of Siva, was full of compassion for fallen beings. He wanted all of them to realise their blissful Self. He could not reach them all with His Silence. So he composed the *Dakshinamurti stotra* in the form of a hymn so that people might read it and understand the Truth.

What is the nature of the illusion? All are in the grip of enjoyment, *i.e*., *bhokta, bhogyam, bhoga*. This is due to the wrong notion that *bhogya vastu* (the objects) are real. The ego, the world and the creator are the fundamentals underlying the illusion. If they are known to be not apart from the Self there will be no more illusion.

The first four stanzas deal with the world. It is shown to be the same as the Master whose Self is that of the seeker also, or the Master to whom the seeker surrenders himself. The second four stanzas deal with the individual whose Self is shown to be the Self of the Master. The ninth stanza deals with Isvara and the tenth with the *siddhi* or Realisation. Such is the scheme of the *stotra*.

Which is the *darpana* (mirror) here? A mirror, as we know it, is an insentient object which reflects light. What corresponds to a mirror in an individual? The light of the Self-luminous Self is reflected on the *Mahatattva*. The reflected light is the mind-ether or the pure mind. This illumines the *vasanas* (latencies) of the individual and hence the sense of 'I' and 'this' arises.

Again, a superficial reading of the *slokas* makes one believe that the bondage, liberation, etc., are all related to the Master *i.e*., Sri Dakshinamurti. It is absurd. Surrender to Him is meant.

Talk 570.

A visitor: Nirguna upasana is said to be difficult and risky. He quoted the verse from Sri Bhagavad Gita, *avyaktahi* etc. (the manifest, etc.)

M.: What is manifest is considered to be unmanifest and doubt is created. Can anything be more immediate and intimate than the Self? Can anything be more plain?

D.: Saguna upasana seems easier.

M.: Do what is easy for you.

Talk 571.

Multiplicity of individuals is a moot point with most persons. A *jiva* is only the light reflected on the ego. The person identifies himself with the ego and argues that there must be more like him. He is not easily convinced of the absurdity of his position. Does a man who sees many individuals in his dream persist in believing them to be real and enquire after them when he wakes up?

This argument does not convince the disputant.

Again, there is the moon. Let anyone look at her from any place at any time; she is the same moon. Everyone knows it. Now suppose that there are several receptacles of water reflecting the moon. The images are all different from one another and from the moon herself. If one of the receptacles falls to pieces, that reflection disappears. Its disappearance does not affect the real moon or the other reflections. It is similar with an individual attaining Liberation. He alone is liberated.

The sectarian of multiplicity makes this his argument against non-duality. "If the Self is single, if one man is liberated, that means that all souls are liberated. In practice it is not so. Therefore *Advaita* is not correct."

The weakness in the argument is that the reflected light of the Self is mistaken for the original Light of the Self. The ego, the world and the individuals are all due to the person's *vasanas*. When they perish, that person's hallucinations disappear, that is to say one pitcher is broken and the relative reflection is at an end.

The fact is that the Self is never bound. There can therefore be no Release for It. All the troubles are for the ego only.

10th November, 1938

A question was asked why it was wrong to say that there is a multiplicity of *jivas*. *Jivas* are certainly many. For a *jiva* is only the ego and forms the reflected light of the Self. Multiplicity of selves may be wrong but not of *jivas*.

M.: Jiva is called so because he sees the world. A dreamer sees many *jivas* in a dream but all of them are not real. The dreamer alone exists and he sees all. So it is with the individual and the world. There is the creed of only one Self which is also called the creed of only one *jiva*. It says that the *jiva* is only one who sees the whole world and the *jivas* therein.

D.: Then *jiva* means the Self here.

M.: So it is. But the Self is not a seer. But here he is said to see the world. So he is differentiated as the *Jiva*.

Talk 572.

D.: Of what use is the fear of death which is common to all?

M.: True, it is common to all. Such fear serves no useful purpose because being overpowered by the latent tendencies of the mind the man dies a natural death. It does not lead him to non-attachment and he cannot investigate the matter.

D.: How then are you giving the same instruction without distinction to visitors?

M.: What do I say? The ego in each one must die. Let him reflect on it. Is there this ego or is there not? By repeated reflection one becomes more and more fit.

11th November, 1938

Talk 573.

Mr. Ranganatha Ayyar, a devotee of fourteen years' standing, is on a visit here. He asked: How long is the interval between one's death and reincarnation?

M.: It may be long or short. But a *jnani* does not have any such changes; he merges into the universal Being, so says the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*.

Some say that those who after death pass into the path of light are not reborn, whereas those who after death take the path of darkness are reborn after they have enjoyed the fruits of karma in their subtle bodies.

If one's merits and demerits are equal, they are directly reborn here. Merits outweighing demerits, the subtle bodies go to heavens and are then reborn here; demerits outweighing merits, they go to hells and are afterwards reborn here.

A *yogabrashta* is said to fare in the same manner. All these are described in the *sastras*. But in fact, there is neither birth nor death. One remains only as what one really is. This is the only Truth.

Talk 574.

D.: What are *asanas* (postures or seats)? Are they necessary?

M.: Many *asanas* with their effects are mentioned in the Yoga *sastras*. The seats are the tiger-skin, grass, etc.; the postures are the 'lotus posture', the 'easy posture' and so on.

Why all these - only to know oneself? "I am the body; the body requires a seat; it is the earth," thinking thus, he seeks seats. But in sleep did he think of the support or the bed: the bed on the cot and the cot on the earth? Did he not exist in sleep too? How was he then?

The truth is - Being the Self, the ego rising up, confusing himself with the body, mistaking the world to be real, differentiating the objects, covered by the ignorance of the 'I'-conceit, he thinks wildly and also looks for seats. He does not understand that he himself is the Centre of all and thus forms the basis for all.

If questioned he talks of the effects of seats and footwear in terms of gravitation, magnetism and so on. Without them he imagines that the power of his austerities will dwindle away.

Wherefrom do they all derive their power? He looks to the effects, seeks their causes and imagines them to be the power of seats and of footwear. A stone thrown up falls back to the ground. Why? Owing to the gravitation, says he. Well - are all these different from his thoughts? Think and say if the stone, the earth and gravity are different from his thoughts. They are all in his mind only. He is the Power and the wielder of it. He is the Centre of all and their support. He is also the Seat.

The seat is meant to make him sit firm. Where and how can he remain firm except in his own real state? This is the Seat.

Talk 575.

D.: How to conquer desire, anger, etc.?

M.: Desire or lust, anger, etc., give you pain. Why? Because of the 'I'-conceit; this 'I'-conceit is from ignorance; ignorance from differentiation; differentiation from the notion of the reality of the world and this again from 'I-am-the-body' idea. The last can be only after the rise of the ego. The ego not arising, the whole chain of mishaps disappears. Therefore prevent the rise of the ego. This can be done by remaining in your own real nature; then lust, anger, etc., are conquered.

D.: So then all these have their root in ignorance.

M.: Quite so. Ignorance gives rise to error, error to conceit, etc. What is ignorance? Can it be of Pure Brahman which is only the Self or Pure Knowledge? Only let the questioner know his own Self, *i.e.*, be the Knowledge; this question will not arise. Because of ignorance he raises the question. Such ignorance is of the questioner and not of the Self. The sun seen, no darkness persists.

There is hoarded wealth in an iron safe. The man says it is his own; the safe does not say so. It is the ownership-conceit that is responsible for the claim.

Nothing is independent of the Self, not even ignorance; for ignorance is only the power of the Self, remaining there without affecting It. However it affects the 'I'-conceit, *i.e.*, the *jiva*. Therefore ignorance is of the *jiva*.

How? The man says, "I do not know myself." Are there then two selves - one the subject and the other the object? He cannot admit it. Is then ignorance at an end for him? No. The rise of the ego is itself the ignorance and nothing more.

Talk 576.

Sutra Bhashya:—

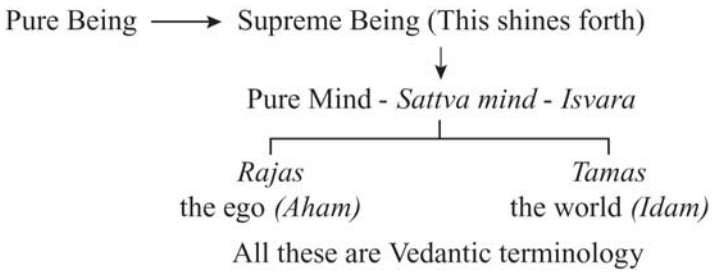
The *sutras* are meant to elucidate and establish the meanings of the texts. The commentaries try to do so by bringing in the opponent's views, refuting them and arriving at conclusions after long discussions; there are also differences of opinion in the same school of thought;

again protagonists and antagonists. Also different schools of thought interpret the same text in different ways and arrive at different conclusions, contrary to each other.

How then is the purpose of the *sutras* served?

15th November, 1938

Talk 577.



Talk 578.

Coming here, some people do not ask about themselves. They ask:

"Does the sage, liberated while alive (*Jivanmukta*), see the world? Is he affected by Karma?

What is liberation after being disembodied? Is one liberated only after being disembodied or even while alive in the body? Should the body of the sage resolve itself in light or disappear from view in any other manner? Can he be liberated though the body is left behind as a corpse?"

Their questions are endless. Why worry oneself in so many ways? Does liberation consist in knowing these?

Therefore I say to them, "Leave liberation alone. Is there bondage? Know this. See yourself first and foremost."

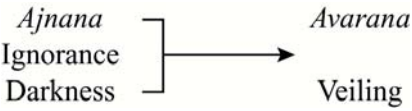
Talk 579.

Avarana (veiling) does not hide the *jiva* in entirety; he knows that he is; only he does not know who he is. He sees the world; but not that it is only Brahman. It is light in darkness (or knowledge in ignorance).

In a cinema show the room is first darkened, artificial light is introduced; only in this light are the pictures projected.

For differentiation a reflected light is thus necessary. A sleeper dreams, he is not out of sleep: only in the darkness or ignorance of sleep can he see the unreal dream objects.

Similarly the darkness of ignorance gives rise to the knowledge of the perceptions of the world.



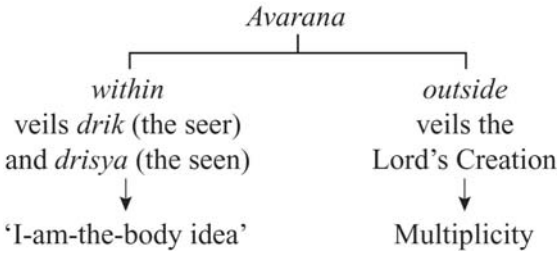
This veiling is a characteristic of ignorance; it is not of the Self: it cannot affect the Self in any manner; it can veil only the *jiva*.

The ego is insentient: united with the light from the Self, it is called *jiva*. But the ego and the light cannot be seen distinct from each other; they are always united together. The mixed product is the *jiva*, the root of all differentiation. All these are spoken of to satisfy the questioners.

Sahasrara (cranium)	}	Ether = *Jnana*
Kantham (throat)	}	Air = Mind
Hridaya (Heart)	}	Light = Intellect
Nabhi (navel)	}	Water = Memory
Mula (Solar plexus)	}	Earth = The Ego

Such is the representation of the subtle body. The senses and other organs act separately, whereas the inner organs and the vital airs can work only in unison. Therefore the former are *vyashti* (individualistic) and the latter are *samashti* (collective).

Avarana (veiling) gives rise to two kinds of veiling.



Jiva is not independent of *Isvara*; nor ignorance of *maya*. Only on waking up from sleep, the man perceives the body and the world, but not in sleep. On the strength of the present knowledge he understands that he remained in deep sleep also. Therefore in sleep *jiva* must be concluded to be in pure state in which the body and the world are not perceived.

D.: Is not *jiva* the reflected light, the 'I-thought'?

M.: He is also a *jiva*; before it also he is *jiva*; the one of them is related to the other as cause and effect. The sleeper *jiva* cannot be independent of *Isvara*. On waking he says "I am the body". If all the worlds together form *virat*, the body is a tiny dot in it. Thus the body is in and of *virat*. What belongs to the *jiva* then? Only the conceit makes him claim the body as himself but not the others. He cannot be independent of *virat*. Similarly,

(1) *Isvara*

(Causal Cosmic Being) → *Prajna* (individual being in deep sleep)

(2) *Hiranyagarbha*

(Causal Subtle Being) → *Taijasa* (individual subtle being)

(3) *Virat*

(Causal gross Being) → *Visva* (individual gross being)

(4) *Maya*

(Causal Ignorance adjunct to *Isvara*) → Ignorance adjunct to *Jiva*

(5) *Brahman*

(Cause) → *Jiva* (Effect)

They say that all these five groups should be unified. This they call the unity of the Five. All these are only polemics!

17th November, 1938

Talk 580.

A party from Rajkot came in a bus. They consisted of four chiefs and four ladies with attendants and a bodyguard. They arrived at 11 a.m. After lunch in their room, they had a short conversation at 12-45 p.m. and left at 1-15 p.m.

One of them said: Here is the mother of the Thakore Saheb. We have come a long distance for the *darshan* of Sri Maharshi. Will He kindly give us some instructions?

Sri Bhagavan smiled and answered: Good that they have come such a long distance for the sake of *darshan*. It is enough that they have said it. What is there for me to say? (Lunch bell).

At 12-45 p.m.

O.: Is a *jnani* different from a *yogi*? What is the difference?

M.: Srimad Bhagavad Gita says that a *jnani* is the true yogi and also a true *bhakta*. Yoga is only a *sadhana* and *jnana* is the *siddhi*.

D.: Is yoga necessary?

M.: It is a *sadhana*. It will not be necessary after *jnana* is attained. All the *sadhanas* are called yogas, *e.g.*, Karma yoga; *Bhakti* yoga; *Jnana* yoga; *Ashtanga* yoga. What is yoga? Yoga means 'union'. Yoga is possible only when there is '*viyoga*' (separation). The person is now under the delusion of *viyoga*. This delusion must be removed. The method of removing it is called yoga.

D.: Which method is the best?

M.: It depends upon the temperament of the individual. Every person is born with the *samskaras* of past lives. One of the methods will be found easy for one person and another method for another. There is no definiteness about it.

D.: How is one to meditate?

M.: What is meditation? It is commonly understood to be concentration on a single thought. Other thoughts are kept out at that time. The single thought also must vanish at the right time. Thought-free consciousness is the goal.

D.: How is the ego to be got rid of?

M.: The ego must be held in order to get rid of it. Hold it first and the rest will be easy.

D.: How is that to be held?

M.: Do you mean to say that there is one ego to hold another ego or to eliminate the other? Are there two egos?

D.: How shall I pray to God?

M.: There-must be 'I' who prays to God. 'I' is certainly immediate and intimate, whereas God is not thought so. Find out that which is more intimate and then the other may be ascertained and prayed to if necessary.

19th November, 1938

Talk 581.

When a child held something to be offered to Sri Bhagavan by the parents, they cajoled the child to offer it to Sri Bhagavan. The child did so gladly. Sri Bhagavan remarked: Look at this! When the child can give a thing away to *Jeja* it is *tyaga*. (*Jeja* -God). See what influence *Jeja* has on children also! Every gift implies unselfishness. That is the whole content of *nishkama* Karma (unselfish action). It means true renunciation. If the giving nature is developed it becomes *tyaga*. If anything is willingly given away it is a delight to the giver and to the receiver. If the same is stolen it is misery to both. *Dana*, *dharma*, *nishkama* Karma are all *tyaga* only. When 'mine' is given up it is *chitta suddhi* (purified mind). When 'I' is given up it is *jnana*. When the nature to give away is developed it results in *jnana*.

Again a little later, a young boy came all alone, unescorted by his parents. He had come from Chengam in a bus. Sri Bhagavan remarked, "The boy has left his parents to come here. This is also an instance of *tyaga*."

21st. 22nd November, 1938

Talk 582.

To an Andhra gentleman Sri Bhagavan said: If one goes on wanting, one's wants cannot be fulfilled. Whereas if one remains desireless anything will be forthcoming. We are not in the wife, children, profession, etc.; but they are in us; they appear and disappear according to one's *prarabdha*.

The mind remaining still is *samadhi*, no matter whether the world is perceived or not.

Environment, time and objects are all in me. How can they be independent of me? They may change, but I remain unchanging, always the same. The objects can be differentiated by means of their names and forms, whereas each one's name is only one and that is 'I'. Ask anyone, he says 'I' and speaks of himself as 'I', even if He is *Isvara*. His name too is 'I' only.

So also of a locality. As long as I am identified with the body so long a locality is distinguishable; otherwise not. Am I the body? Does the body announce itself as 'I'?

Clearly all these are in me. All these wiped out entirely, the residual Peace is 'I'. This is *samadhi*, this is 'I'.

Talk 583.

Mr. V. Ganapati Sastri showed Sri Bhagavan a letter from a Spanish lady, Mercedes De Acosta, saying she would be coming here the next day. Sri Bhagavan remarked: "See the trouble to so many because I am here."

23rd November, 1938

REMINISCENCE

Talk 584.

A certain visitor began to pull the *pankah*. Sri Bhagavan said: "Because it is cold, they have placed fire by my side. Why should the *pankah* be pulled?"

Then he continued: "On a cold morning, when I was in Virupaksha cave, I was sitting in the open. I was feeling cold. People used to come, see me and go back. A group of Andhra visitors had come. I did not notice what they were doing. They were behind me. Suddenly a noise '*tak*' - and water over my head! I shivered with cold. I looked back. They had broken a coconut and poured the water on me. They thought that it was worship. They took me for a stone image."

Talk 585.

Sri Bhagavan said that this town is peculiar in that there are nine roads leading to it, not counting the railroad; *navadware pure dehe* (in the body - the city of nine gates).

Talk 586.

An Andhra visitor asked: How is one to be quiet? It is so difficult to be so. Should we practise *yoga* for it? Or is there any other means for it?

M.: What is not difficult looks difficult. A man is prone to wander about. He is told to stay quiet at home, but finds it difficult to do so because he wants to wander about.

D.: Is there any particular *upasana* which is more efficacious than others?

M.: All *upasanas* are equally efficacious. But each one takes easily to one kind of *upasana* which suits his previous *vasanas*.

24th November, 1938

Talk 587.

The Spanish lady and her lady friend have come. They asked: You say the Heart is on the right. Can you explain how it is so?

Sri Bhagavan handed over the extract from the *Psychological Review* of Philadelphia for her to read. He also added. The Heart is the place wherefrom the 'I-thought' arises.

D.: So you mean the spiritual Heart as distinguished from the physical heart?

M.: Yes. It is explained in Ch. V of *Sri Ramana Gita*.

D.: Is there any stage when one might feel the Heart?

M.: It is within the experience of everyone. Everyone touches the right side of his chest when he says 'I'.

Both the ladies kneeled before Sri Bhagavan one after another and asked for blessings. Then they left for Pondicherry on their way to Colombo.

25th November, 1938

Talk 588.

To an Andhra seeker, Sri Bhagavan said: *Sannyasa* is mentioned for one who is fit. It consists in renunciation not of material objects but of attachment to them. *Sannyasa* can be practised by anyone even at home. Only one must be fit for it. Again.

A *Kutichaka* is one who takes *sannyasa* and lives in a hermitage;
A *Bahudaka* is one who takes *sannyasa* and goes to places of pilgrimage;
A *Hamsa* is an *upasaka sannyasi*;
A *Paramahamsa* is a realised *sannyasi*.

27th November, 1938

Talk 589.

Somasundara Swami, a long standing devotee, asked: There is *akasa* in a mirror and it reflects images. How are these contained in the mirror?

M.: Objects remain in space. Objects and space are together reflected in the mirror. Just as the things are found in space, so they are in the reflection also. The mirror is itself thin. How can these objects be contained in its compass?

D.: How does the *akasa* in a pot illustrate this point?

M.: There is no reflection in the *akasa* of the pot. The reflection is only in the water in it. Keeping several pots filled with water in a tank, the *akasa* is reflected equally in the water in each of the pots and in the water of the tank. Similarly the whole universe is reflected in each individual.

D.: The mouths of the pots must be above the surface of the water in the tank.

M.: Yes, it must be so. Otherwise can the pots be recognised if sunk in the tank?

D.: How does the reflection take place there?

M.: Pure ether cannot take reflections; only the ether of water can do so. Glass cannot reflect objects; only a plate of glass with an opaque lining on its back can reflect the objects in front of it. Similarly Pure Knowledge does not contain objects in it nor reflect objects. Only with the limiting adjunct, the mind, it reflects the world.

Neither in *samadhi* nor in deep sleep does the world remain. There cannot be illusion either in bright light or in total darkness. Only in dim light a rope seems a snake. Similarly Pure Consciousness remains light only; it is pure knowledge. The mind rising from it is deluded that the objects remain apart.

D.: So then the mind is the mirror.

M.: Mind - mind what is it? It is a mixture of *Chit* (intelligence) and *sankalpas* (thoughts). Therefore it forms all these - the mirror, light, darkness and the reflections.

D.: But I do not see it.

M.: Chidakasa (chit-ether) is Pure Knowledge only, It is the source of mind. Just at the moment of rising up, the mind is only light; only afterwards the thought "I am this" rises up; this 'I-thought' forms the *jiva* and the world.

The first light is the pure mind, the mind ether or *Isvara*. Its modes manifest as objects. Because it contains all these objects within itself it is called the mind-ether. Why ether? Like ether containing objects it contains the thoughts, therefore it is the mind-ether.

Again, just as the physical ether though accommodating all the gross objects (the whole universe) is itself the content of the mind-ether, so also the latter is itself the content of *Chit*-ether. The last one is *Chit* Itself. There are no things contained in it. It remains as Pure Knowledge only.

D.: Why call it ether? Physical ether is not sentient.

M.: Ether denotes not only the insentient physical ether but also Pure Knowledge. Knowledge does not consist in knowing objects: this is relative knowledge. But Knowledge in its purity remains all alone, One, unique, transcendent Light!

D.: Well - should we be imagining it in our meditation?

M.: Why imagine? We can think of another only if we are independent of it, whereas here we cannot remain independent of this Pure Knowledge. Rather, only IT is! How can It be imagined to be so and so or such and such?

D.: How are we to proceed?

M.: Only get rid of the non-self.

D.: It looks all right now; but later it is all forgotten.

M.: Your forgetfulness implies knowledge, for you know you forgot; otherwise how can you speak of forgetting it? So forgetfulness also is *Chit-akasa* (Chit-ether) only.

D.: How then is it not clear to me?

M.: Chit is knowledge pure and simple. The mind proceeds from it; the mind is made up of thoughts. Darkness or ignorance interposing.

Pure Knowledge seems different from what It really is; the same is seen as 'I' and the 'world' which are full of desire, attachment, hatred, etc. Therefore desire, etc., are said to veil the Reality.

D.: How to be rid of thoughts? Is it as said in the *Atma-Vidya* - the eye of the mental eye, etc.?

M.: There the mind stands for ether, Being (*sat*); and the eye for knowledge (*chit*); both *sat* and *chit* together form the universe.

D.: How to realise the same?

M.: As pointed out in the *Atma Vidya* "being the eye of the mental eye, the ether of the mental ether.....", meaning, the Knowledge behind the relative knowledge, the *Chit*-Ether containing the mental ether, remains as the Only One always shining bright.

D.: Still I do not understand. How shall I realise it?

M.: It is also said, "Remain free from thoughts," and "It is realised only in the mind drawn within." Therefore, the mind made free from thoughts, and merged in the Heart. is *Chit* Itself.

D.: Is the aforesaid mental ether *Isvara* or *Hiranyagarbha*?

M.: Can the latter remain independent of the former? The same is *Isvara* and *Hiranyagarbha*.

D.: How do they differ from each other?

M.: The Immanent Being is called *Isvara*.

D.: Is not the Immanent Being *Chit-akasa* only?

M.: Immanence can only be with *Maya*. It is the Knowledge of Being along with *Maya*; from this subtle conceit *Hiranyagarbha*; from the latter the gross conceit *virat*. *Chit-atma* is Pure Being only.

13th December, 1938

Talk 590.

Two ladies, one Swiss and the other French, visited Maharshi. The younger of the ladies asked several questions, of which the most important was: "Brahman is the same as *jiva*. If the *jiva* be under illusion it amounts to saying that Brahman is under illusion. How is that possible?"

M.: If Brahman be under illusion and wants disillusionment let Him raise the question.

14th December, 1938

Talk 591.

D.: Seekers who are in immediate proximity of the Master can get grace by *darsana*, *sparsana*, etc. (look, touch, etc.). But how does one get the same grace when the person is at a distance?

M.: By yoga *drishti* (yogic look).

Mr. Chopra, a Punjabi employed in Singapore, is on a visit here and raised a few questions.

D.: What is the efficacy of the name?

Sri Bhagavan read out the extract from the *Vision*. It was a translation of Namdev's stanzas.

D.: How does the name help Realisation?

M.: The original name is always going on spontaneously without any effort on the part of the individual. That name is *aham* - 'I'. But when it becomes manifest it manifests as *ahamkara* - the ego. The oral repetition of *nama* leads one to mental repetition which finally resolves itself into the eternal vibration.

D.: But these are all mental or physical.

M.: The mind or the mouth cannot act without the Self. Tukaram, the great Maharashtra Saint, used to remain in *samadhi* in the day and sing and dance at night with large crowds of people. He always used to utter the name of Sri Rama.

Once he was answering calls of nature and also saying "Ram, Ram". An orthodox priest was shocked at the unholy mention of the sacred name and so reprimanded him and ordered him to be silent when he answered calls of nature.

Tukaram said, "All right!" and remained mute. But at once there arose the name of Rama from every pore of Tukaram and the priest was horrified by the din. He then prayed to Tukaram "Restrictions are only for the common people and not for saints like you."

D.: It is said that Sri Ramakrishna saw life in the image of Kali which he worshipped. Can it be true?

M.: The life was perceptible to Sri Ramakrishna and not to all. The vital force was due to himself. It was his own vital force which manifested as if it were outside and drew him in. Were the image full of life it must have been found so by all. But everything is full of life. That is the fact. Many devotees have had experiences similar to those of Sri Ramakrishna.

D.: How can there be life in stone? It is unconscious.

M.: The whole universe is full of life. You say the stone is unconscious. It is your self-consciousness which now speaks of unconsciousness. When a person wants to see if there is an article in a dark room he takes a lamp to look for it. The light is useful for detecting the presence and the absence of the thing. Consciousness is necessary for discovering if a thing is conscious or not. If a man remains in a dark room one need not take a lamp to find him. If called, he answers. He does not require a lamp to announce his presence. Consciousness is thus self-shining.

Now you say you were unconscious in sleep and self-conscious in the wakeful state. Which is the Reality? The Reality must be continuous and eternal. Neither the unconsciousness nor the self-consciousness of the present is the Reality. But you admit your existence all through. The pure Being is the reality. The others are mere associations. The pure Being cannot be otherwise than consciousness. Otherwise you cannot say that you exist. Therefore consciousness is the reality. When that consciousness is associated with *upadhis* you speak of self-consciousness, unconsciousness, sub-consciousness, super-consciousness, human-consciousness, dog-consciousness, tree-consciousness and so on. The unaltering common factor in all of them is consciousness.

Therefore the stone is as much unconscious as you are in sleep. Is that totally devoid of consciousness?

D.: But a dog-consciousness is different from my consciousness. I cannot read the Bible to the dog. The tree again does not move whereas I move and act.

M.: Call the tree a standing man; and call the man a moving tree.

An American gentleman who also took part in the conversation would not allow Sri Bhagavan to explain and so it stopped here.

Talk 592.

The Punjabi gentleman referred to the popular belief of a worm being metamorphosed to a wasp (*bhramarakita nyaya*) which Sri Bhagavan had mentioned to the ladies in the course of conversation yesterday. Sri Bhagavan recalled some interesting reminiscences:

1. "I had previously heard of this *bhramarakita nyaya*. After I came to Tiruvannamalai, when I was staying in Gurumoortham, I noticed a red wasp construct a hive in which it placed five or six grubs and then flew away. My curiosity was roused and I wanted to test the truth of the oft-quoted *nyaya*. I waited some days, maybe ten days. I then tapped the hive. It broke and there I found that all the five or six grubs had united together and taken the shape of a wasp, but it was white.

2. Later when I was in Virupaksha Cave, I saw a red wasp construct five or six hives in each of which it placed five or six grubs and flew away. After about ten days, a black beetle, smaller than the wasp, buzzed round the hives and closed each of then, with a little black mud and flew away. I was wondering at the intrusion of the beetle on the hive of the wasp. I waited a few days and then gently opened one of the hives. Five or six black bodies came out and each of them was a black beetle. I thought it strange.

3. Again when I was in Pachyamman Temple, I saw a red wasp constructing five or six hives on a pillar in the temple. It placed five or six grubs in each of them and buzzed away. I watched it for several days. The wasp did not return. There was no black beetle also. After about fifteen days, I opened one of the hives. All the grubs had united into a white mass of wasp-like form. It dropped down and was stunned by the fall. After a few minutes, it began to crawl. Its colour was gradually changing. In a short time, there were two little specks on its sides which grew into wings as I watched and the full-grown wasp flew away from the ground.

4. When I was in the Mango-Tree Cave I noticed a caterpillar-like worm crawl up a wall. It stopped in one place and fixed two spots which it later connected up with a thin filament from its body. It held the filament with its mouth and rested its tail end on the wall. It remained so several days. I was watching it. It shrivelled up in course of time. I wondered if there

was life in it. So I gently tickled it with a thin stalk. There was no life within. I left it there. But in a few days more I found that there was only a thin dry skin left behind and the inner thing had flown away.

5. I had also seen the flies carrying tiny grubs on their legs which they deposited on offal. The grubs later flew away as flies."

D.: They may be eggs laid by the flies.

M.: But they move and struggle and then shape themselves as flies.

Talk 593.

Sri Bhagavan mentioned another interesting reminiscence. "When I was a boy I had seen the fishermen divert water from its main course and keep a pot through which the diverted water flowed. The artificial way was spread with tobacco stems. Strangely enough the larger fishes always took the new way and fell into the pot. The fishermen who were simply sitting quiet used to take the fish out from the pot and throw them into their baskets. I thought at the time it was strange. Later, when I was staying here I heard some man recite a piece from Thayumanavar which mentioned the same trick of the fishermen."

15th December, 1938

Talk 594.

The Spanish lady, Madam Mercedes De Acorta, has written a letter to Mr. Hague, the American mining engineer who is here as a temporary resident for the last two months. She has raised a few questions there: "If the individual Self merges into the universal Self, how can one pray to God for the uplift of humanity?" The question seems to be common among the thinkers of the West.

Sri Bhagavan said: They pray to God and finish with "Thy Will be done!" If His Will be done why do they pray at all? It is true that the Divine Will prevails at all times and under all circumstances. The individuals cannot act of their own accord. Recognise the force of the Divine Will and keep quiet. Each one is looked after by God. He has created all. You are one among 2,000 millions. When He looks after so many will He omit you? Even common sense dictates that one should abide by His Will.

Again there is no need to let Him know your needs. He knows them Himself and will look after them.

Still more, why do you pray? Because you are helpless yourself and you want the Higher Power to help you. Well, does not your Creator and Protector know your weakness? Should you parade your weakness in order to make Him know it?

D.: But God helps those who help themselves.

M.: Certainly. Help yourself and that is itself according to God's Will. Every action is prompted by Him only. As for prayer for the sake of others, it looks so unselfish on the surface of it. But analyse the feeling and you will detect selfishness there also. You desire others' happiness so that you may be happy. Or you want the credit for having interceded on others' behalf. God does not require an intermediary. Mind your business and all will be well.

D.: Does not God work His Will through some chosen person?

M.: God is in all and works through all. But His presence is better recognised in purified minds. The pure ones reflect God's actions more clearly than the impure minds. Therefore people say that they are the chosen ones. But the 'chosen' man does not himself say so. If he thinks that he is the intermediary then it is clear that he retains his individuality and that there is no complete surrender.

D.: Are not the Brahmins considered to be the priests or intermediaries between God and others?

M.: Yes. But who is a Brahmin? A Brahmin is one who has realised Brahman. Such a one has no sense of individuality in him. He cannot think that he acts as an intermediary.

Again, as for prayer, a realised man does not see others as different from oneself. How can he pray at all, and to whom and for what? His very presence is the consummation of happiness for all. So long as you think that there are others different from you, you pray for them. But the sense of separateness is ignorance. This ignorance is again the cause of feeling helplessness. You know that you are weak and helpless. How then can you help others? If you say, "By prayer to God", God knows His business and does not require your intercession for others.

Help yourself so that you may become strong. That is done by complete surrender. That means you offer yourself to Him. So you cannot retain your individuality after surrender. You then abide by His Will. Thus Silence is the Highest of all achievements.

Silence is the ocean in which all the rivers of all the religions discharge themselves. So says Thayumanavar. He also adds that the Vedic religion is the only one which combines both philosophy and religion.

16th December, 1938

Talk 595.

The two lady visitors returned in the morning and the younger one asked:

"Is the experience of the Highest State the same to all? Or is there any difference?"

M.: The Highest State is the same and the experience is also the same.

D.: But I find some difference in the interpretations put on the Highest Truth.

M.: The interpretations are made with the mind. The minds are different and so the interpretations are different.

D.: I mean to ask if the seers express themselves differently?

M.: The expressions may differ according to the nature of the seekers. They are meant to guide the seekers.

One seer speaks in the terms of Christianity, another in those of Islam, a third of Buddhism, etc. Is that due to their upbringing?

M.: Whatever may be their upbringing, their experience is the same. But the modes of expression differ according to circumstances.

Talk 596.

A visitor asked: Sri Bhagavan said last night that God is guiding us. Then why should we make an effort to do anything?

M.: Who asks you to do so? If there was that faith in the guidance of God this question would not have arisen.

D.: The fact is that God guides us. Then what is the use of these instructions to people?

M.: They are for those who seek instructions. If you are firm in your belief in the guidance of God, stick to it, and do not concern yourself with what happens around you.

Furthermore, there may be happiness or misery. Be equally indifferent to both and abide in the faith of God. That will be so only when one's faith is strong that God looks after all of us.

Mr. Chopra asked: "How shall I secure that firm faith?"

M.: Exactly. It is for such as these who want instructions. There are persons who seek freedom from misery. They are told that God guides all and so there need not be any concern about what happens. If they are of the best type they at once believe it and firmly abide by faith in God.

But there are others who are not so easily convinced of the truth of the bare statement. They ask: "Who is God? What is His nature? Where is He? How can He be realised?" and so on.

In order to satisfy them intellectual discussion is found necessary. Statements are made, their pros and cons are argued, and the truth is thus made clear to the intellect.

When the matter is understood intellectually the earnest seeker begins to apply it practically. He argues at every moment, "For whom are these thoughts? Who am I?" and so forth, until he is well-established in the conviction that a Higher Power guides us. That is firmness of faith. Then all his doubts are cleared and he needs no further instructions.

D.: We also have faith in God.

M.: If it had been firm no questions would have arisen. The person will remain perfectly happy in his Faith in the Omnipotent.

D.: Is the enquiry into the Self the same as the above mentioned faith?

M.: The enquiry into the Self is inclusive of all, faith, devotion, *jnana*, yoga and all.

D.: A man sometimes finds that the physical body does not permit steady meditation. Should he practise yoga for training the body for the purpose?

M.: It is according to one's *samskaras* (predispositions). One man will practise *hatha yoga* for curing his bodily ills; another man will trust to God to cure them; a third man will use his will-power for it and a fourth man may be totally indifferent to them. But all of them will persist in meditation. The quest for the Self is the essential factor and all the rest are mere accessories.

A man may have mastered the *Vedanta* philosophy and yet remain unable to control his thoughts. He may have a predisposition (*purva samskara*) which takes him to practise *hatha* yoga. He will believe that the mind can be controlled only by yoga and so he will practise it.

D.: What is most suitable for gaining facilities for steady *dhyana*?

M.: It depends on one's *samskara*. One may find *hatha* yoga suitable and another man *nama japa*, and so on. The essential point is the *atma-vichara* - enquiry into the Self.

D.: Is it enough if I spend some time in the mornings and some time in the evenings for this *atma-vichara*? Or should I do it always - say, even when I am writing or walking?

M.: Now what is your real nature? Is it writing, walking, or being? The one unalterable reality is *Being*. Until you realise that state of pure being you should pursue the enquiry. If once you are established in it there will be no further worry.

No one will enquire into the source of thoughts unless thoughts arise. So long as you think "I am walking," "I am writing," enquire who does it.

These actions will however go on when one is firmly established in the Self. Does a man always say, "I am a man, I am a man, I am a man," every moment of his life? He does not say so and yet all his actions are going on.

D.: Is an intellectual understanding of the Truth necessary?

M.: Yes. Otherwise why does not the person realise God or the Self at once, *i.e.*, as soon as he is told that God is all or the Self is all? That shows some wavering on his part. He must argue with himself and gradually convince himself of the Truth before his faith becomes firm.

20th December, 1938

Talk 597.

A Swiss lady, Mrs. J. C. S. Hick-Riddingh, asked: "Does Self-Realisation imply occult powers also?"

M.: The Self is the most intimate and eternal Being whereas the *siddhis* are foreign. The one requires effort to acquire and the other does not.

The powers are sought by the mind which must be kept alert whereas the Self is realised when the mind is destroyed. The powers manifest only when there is the ego. The ego makes you aware of others and in its absence there are no others to be seen. The Self is beyond the ego and is realised after the ego is eliminated. The elimination of the ego makes one unaware of others. How can the question of others arise and where is the use of occult powers for a Self-Realised Being?

Self-Realisation may be accompanied by occult powers or it may not be. If the person had sought such powers before Realisation, he may get the powers after Realisation. There are others who had not sought such powers and had attempted only Self-Realisation. They do not manifest such powers.

These powers may also be sought and gained even after Self-Realisation. But then they are used for a definite purpose, *i.e.* the benefit of others as in the case of Chudala.

Sikhidhvaja was a pious king. His spouse was Chudala. They received instructions from a sage. The king, being busy with the administration of his kingdom, could not put the instructions into practice, whereas Chudala put them into practice and gained Self-Realisation. Consequently she appeared more charming than before. The king was struck by her growing charm and asked her about it. She said that all charm was due to the Self and he was only noting the charm of Self-Realisation in her. He said that she was silly. There were great *tapasvis* who could not realise the Self even after long periods of *tapas* and what about a silly woman who was all along in the family and in the worldly life?

However, Chudala was not offended because she was firm in the Self and only wished that her husband should realise the Self and

be happy. She then thought that unless she could prove her worth by manifesting some extraordinary powers he could not be convinced and she began to seek occult powers and gained them. But she did not betray them just then. Constant association with her made the king dispassionate. He began to dislike the worldly life and desired to retire into the forest for performing *tapasya*. So he told his wife that he wanted to leave the world for the forest. She was delighted at the development, but pretended to be very much concerned with his unkind decision. He hesitated out of consideration for her. In the meantime, his dispassion gained in force and he decided to leave home even without her consent.

When the queen was sleeping one night he suddenly left the palace by stealth and retired into the forest. He was seeking some solitary spot where he could perform his *tapas*. When the queen woke up she did not find her husband and immediately found out by her occult powers what had really happened. She rejoiced in her husband's determination. She called the ministers and said that the king had gone on some important business and that the administration should be carried on as efficiently as ever. She herself administered the state in the absence of the king.

Eighteen years passed. She then knew that the king was fit for Self-Realisation. So she appeared to him disguised as Kumbha and so on. He then realised the Self and returned to rule the kingdom with the queen.

The point is that occult powers are sought and gained for the benefit of others by Self-Realised persons also. But the sages are not deluded by the possession of such powers.

D.: Does the sage use occult powers for making others realise the Self or is the mere fact of his Self-Realisation enough for it?

M.: The force of his Self-Realisation is far more powerful than the use of all other powers.

Inasmuch as there is no ego in him, there are not others for him. What is the highest benefit that can be conferred on others? It is happiness. Happiness is born of Peace. Peace can reign only when there is no disturbance. Disturbance is due to thoughts which arise in the mind. When the mind itself is absent there will be perfect

Peace. Unless a person had annihilated his mind he cannot gain peace and be happy. Unless he himself is happy he cannot bestow happiness on others.

When there is no mind he cannot be aware of others. So the mere fact of his Self-Realisation is itself enough to make all others happy.

D.: Can *samadhi* come and go?

M.: What is *samadhi*? *Samadhi* is one's essential nature. How then can it come or go?

If you do not realise your essential nature, your sight remains obstructed. What is the obstruction? Find it and remove it. So one's efforts are meant only for the removal of obstructions which hide the true vision. The real nature remains the same. When once it is realised it is permanent.

D.: But Mr. Brunton says that he had one hour's *samadhi*. Therefore I asked the question.

M.: A practiser gains peace of mind and is happy. That peace is the result of his efforts. But the real state must be effortless. The effortless *samadhi* is the true one and the perfect state. It is permanent. The efforts are spasmodic and so also their results.

When the real, effortless, permanent, happy nature is realised it will be found to be not inconsistent with the ordinary activities of life. The *samadhi* reached after efforts looks like abstraction from the external activities. A person might be so abstracted or live freely among people without detriment to his Peace and Happiness because that is his true nature or the Self.

21st December, 1938

Talk 598.

Sri Bhagavan shows great humour at times: He read *Upamanya Bhakta Vilas* which contains a passage where Arunachalesvara is said to have robbed Tirujnanasambandar and his group of followers of all their possessions by His *bhutaganas* disguised as dacoits. Sri Bhagavan remarked: "Siva Himself was waylaid in *Tiruvudal Utsava* and He practised the same trick on His devotees. Can it be so?"

Talk 599.

A saying of Laotze from *Tao Teh Ch'ing* was read out in the hall: "By his non-action the sage governs all."

Sri Bhagavan remarked: Non-action is unceasing activity. The sage is characterised by eternal and intense activity. His stillness is like the apparent stillness of a fast rotating top (gyroscope). Its very speed cannot be followed by the eye and so it appears to be still. Yet it is rotating. So is the apparent inaction of the sage.

This must be explained because the people generally mistake stillness to be inertness. It is not so.

24th December, 1938

Talk 600.

A young man asked in broken Tamil:

How long will it be before Self-Realisation?

M.: First know what Self means and also what Realisation means: then you will know all.

D.: The mind must realise in the Heart.

M.: Be it so. What is mind?

D.: Mind, Heart are all *avatars* of Perumal (Vaishnavite term for incarnate God).

M.: If so no need to worry ourselves.

D.: On this basis how can we realise?

M.: Surrender the mind to Perumal (God). His *avatar* cannot remain independent of Him. Render unto Him what is His and be happy.

D.: How to do so?

M.: How is the mind known to us? Owing to its activities, namely, thoughts. Whenever thoughts arise remember they are all modes of Perumal and they cannot be otherwise, this is enough; this is the surrender of the mind.

Can anything exist independent of Perumal? All is Perumal alone. He acts through all. Why worry ourselves?

27th December, 1938

Talk 601.

G. V. Subbaramiah, an Andhra devotee, mentioned something about *time*.

M.: What is *time*? It posits a state, one's recognition of it, and also the changes which affect it. The interval between two states is called *time*. A state cannot come into being unless the mind calls it into existence. The mind must be held by the Self. If the mind is not made use of there is no concept of time. Time and space are in the mind but one's true state lies beyond the mind. The question of time does not arise at all to the one established in one's true nature.

Mr. Narayana Iyer: Sri Bhagavan's words are so pleasing to hear but their import is beyond our comprehension. That seems to be far too much for us even to hope to realise.

G. V. S.: Our grasp is only intellectual. If Sri Bhagavan be pleased to direct us with a few instructions we shall be highly benefited.

M.: He who instructs an ardent seeker to do this or that is not a true master. The seeker is already afflicted by his activities and wants Peace and Rest. In other words he wants cessation of his activities. Instead of that he is told to do something in addition to, or in place of, his other activities. Can that be a help to the seeker?

Activity is creation; activity is the destruction of one's inherent happiness. If activity be advocated the adviser is not a master but the killer. Either the Creator (*Brahma*) or Death (*Yama*) may be said to have come in the guise of such a master. He cannot liberate the aspirant but strengthens his fetters.

D.: When we attempt to cease from activity the very attempt is action. So activity seems to be inevitable.

M.: True. Thayumanavar has also alluded to it. A doctor advises a patient to take the prescribed medicine with only one condition. That condition is not to think of a monkey when he takes the medicine. Can the patient ever take the medicine? Will he not think of the monkey whenever he tries not to do so?

So also, when people try to give up thoughts their object is frustrated by their very attempt.

D.: How then is the state to be attained?

M.: What is there to attain? A thing remains to be attained if it is not already attained. But here one's very being is *That*.

Someone: Why do we not then know it?

Annamalaiswami: I should always try to think *I am That*.

M.: Why should one think "I am That"? He is That only. Does a man go on thinking that he is a man?

Mr. Anantachari: The belief 'I am a man' is so deep that we cannot help thinking so.

M.: Why should you think "I am a man"? If you are challenged you may say 'I am a man'. Therefore the thought - 'I am a man' - is called up when another thought, say 'I am an animal', protrudes itself. Similarly, the thought *I am That* is necessary only so long as the other thought *I am a man* persists.

D.: The thought 'I am a man' is so firm that it cannot he got rid of.

M.: Be your true Self. Why should you think 'I am a man'?

D.: The thought 'I am a man' is so natural.

M.: Not so. On the other hand 'I am' is natural. Why do you qualify it with 'a man'?

D.: 'I am a man' is so obvious whereas 'I am That' is not understood by us.

M.: You are neither *That* nor *This*. The truth is 'I am'. "I AM that I AM" according to the Bible also. Mere Being is alone natural. To limit it to 'being a man' is uncalled for.

D.: (Humorously) If votes be taken the majority will be on my side. (Laughter)

M.: I cast my vote also on your side (Laughter). I say also 'I am a man': but I am not limited to the body. It is IN ME. That is the difference.

Someone: The limitation (*upadhi*) of being a man cannot be got rid of.

M.: How were you in deep sleep? There was no thought of being a man.

Another: So, the state of sleep must be brought about even when one is awake.

M.: Yes. It is *jagrat-sushupti*.

Sri Bhagavan continued: Some people even say that while they sleep they are enclosed somewhere in the body. They forget that such an idea did not persist in sleep but rises up only on waking. They bring their waking-state to bear upon their sleep.

The lights went down and all retired.

1st January, 1939

Talk 602.

Dr. Emile Gatheir, S. J., Professor of Philosophy at the Sacred Heart College, Shembaganur, Kodaikanal, asked: "Can you kindly give me a summary of your teachings?"

M.: They are found in small booklets, particularly *Who am I*?

D.: I shall read them. But may I have the central point of your teachings from your lips?

M.: The central point is the thing.

D.: It is not clear.

M.: Find the Centre.

D.: I am from God. Is not God distinct from me?

M.: Who asks this question? God does not ask it. You ask it. So find who you are and then you may find if God is distinct from you.

D.: But God is Perfect and I am imperfect. How can I ever know Him fully?

M.: God does not say so. The question is for you. After finding who you are you may see what God is.

D.: But you have found your Self. Please let us know if God is distinct from you.

M.: It is a matter of experience. Each one must experience it himself.

D.: Oh! I see. But God is Infinite and I am finite. I have a personality which can never merge into God. Is it not so?

M.: Infinity and Perfection do not admit of parts. If a finite being comes out of infinity the perfection of infinity is marred. Thus your statement is a contradiction in terms.

D.: No. I see both God and creation.

M.: How are you aware of your personality?

D.: I have a soul. I know it by its activities.

M.: Did you know it in deep sleep?

D.: The activities are suspended in deep sleep.

M.: But you exist in sleep. So do you now too. Which of these two is your real state?

D.: Sleep and waking are mere accidents. I am the substance behind the accidents.

(He looked up at the clock and said that it was time for him to catch the train. He left after thanking Sri Bhagavan. So the conversation ended abruptly).

8th January, 1939

Talk 603.

Lady Bateman came here with her daughter to visit Sri Bhagavan. She brought a letter from Pascaline Maillert, Versailles, which reads as follows:

"Two years have come and gone since last I crossed the threshold of Thy Ashram and yet in spirit I have ever remained there.

"Though illusion still often veils the vision of Reality revealed in the blessed Silence of Thy Presence.

"Though the Silver Thread of Self-awareness be often lost midst changing light and shadows, still the inner urge to realise the Self remains and stronger grows and more insistent as Grace and search go hand in hand.

"At times, yet rare, with no apparent cause, spontaneous awareness of the 'I' springs up and bliss fills the heart with glowing warmth. Effortless concentration goes with this state while all desires do come to rest fulfilled in utmost peace, till once more the veil is drawn and illusion seeks to blur the vision of the Real.

"Yet what the soul has experienced and knows repeatedly as Truth, can neither be denied nor ever forgotten and 'That which is' gives constant strength to persevere.

"I pray to Thee as to my Self for light and guidance that I know are ever there and at Thy feet lay offerings of unchanging love."

(Sd.) Pascaline, 11, Rue des Reservous.
Versailles, 21st November, 1938.

10th January, 1939

Talk 604.

A certain lady was singing a devotional song. It said among other things:

"Thou art my father,

Thou art my mother,

Thou art my relations,

My possessions and all," and so on.

Sri Bhagavan remarked with a smile, "Yes, Yes, Thou art this, that and everything except 'I'. Why not say 'I am Thou' and finish it?"

Talk 605.

A certain Andhra visitor gave Sri Bhagavan a slip of paper containing several questions which he desired to be answered. Sri Bhagavan took it in His hands, went through the questions and said:

M.: "All these questions arise so long as there is one who can ask questions. If the questioner is sought and found, the questions will end of their own accord."

The man said in reply: Several people raise these points and I do not know how to meet them. Hence I desire to know the fact (*vishaya* was the word used).

M.: If the *vishayi* (*i.e.*, the basis of the facts) be understood, the *vishayas* (*i.e.*, the facts) become clear.

Talk 606.

Mr. Venkatakrishnayya, a lawyer-devotee, visited Sri Bhagavan ten years before and asked Him what he should do to improve himself.

Sri Bhagavan told him to perform *Gayatri Japa*. The young man went away satisfied. When he returned after some years, he asked:

D.: If I meditate on the meaning of the *Gayatri mantra*, my mind again wanders. What is to be done?

M.: Were you told to meditate on the *mantra* or its meaning? You must think of the one who repeats the *mantra*.

Again, the same man had seen another reputed Mahatma who told him to say *Om Namah* instead of "OM" because pure "OM" is meant for *sannyasis* whereas others can repeat *Om Namah*. When he came here he asked Sri Bhagavan about it. Sri Bhagavan replied casually:

Should not others besides the *sannyasis* enquire into the Self and realise it?

17th January, 1939

Talk 607.

Sri Bhagavan said to Lady Bateman: There is a fixed state; sleep, dream and waking states are mere movements in it. They are like pictures moving on the screen in a cinema show.

Everyone sees the screen as well as the pictures but ignores the screen and takes in the pictures alone. The *Jnani* however considers only the screen and not the pictures. The pictures certainly move on the screen yet do not affect it. The screen itself does not move but remains stationary.

Similarly, a person travels in a train and thinks that he moves. Really speaking he sits and reposes in his seat, and it is the train which is steaming fast. He however superimposes the motion of the train on himself because he has identified himself with the body. He says, "I have passed one station - now another - yet another - and so on". A little consideration will show that he sits unmoved and the stations run past him. But that does not prevent him from saying that he has travelled all the way as if he exerted himself to move every foot of the way.

The *jnani* is fully aware that the true state of Being remains fixed and stationary and that all actions go on around him. His nature does not change and his state is not affected in the least. He looks on everything with unconcern and remains blissful himself.

His is the true state and also the primal and natural state of being. When once the man reaches it he gets fixed there. Fixed once, fixed ever he will be. Therefore that state which prevailed in the days of Pathala Linga Cellar continues uninterrupted, with only this difference that the body remained there immobile but is now active.

There is no difference between a *jnani* and an *ajnani* in their conduct. The difference lies only in their angles of vision. The ignorant man identifies himself with the ego and mistakes its activities for those of the Self, whereas the ego of the *jnani* has been lost and he does not limit himself to this body or that, this event or that, and so on.

There is action in seeming inaction, and also inaction in seeming action as in the following instances:

1. A child is fed while asleep. On waking up the next morning, he denies having been fed. It is a case of inaction in seeming action. For although the mother saw him take his food the child himself is not aware.

2. The cartman sleeps in the cart when it jogs along the way in the night and yet he reaches the destination and claims to have driven the cart. This is a case of action in seeming inaction.

3. A man appearing to listen to a story nods his head to the speaker but yet his mind is otherwise active and he does not really follow the story.

4. Two friends sleep side by side. One of them dreams that both of them travel round the globe and have varied experiences. On waking the dreamer tells the other that both of them have been round the earth. The other treats the story with contempt.

The lady protested that dream and sleep do not make any appeal to her. She was asked why then she should be careful about her bed unless she courted sleep.

She said that it was for relaxation of the exhausted limbs, rather a state of auto-intoxication. "The sleep state is really dull, whereas the waking state is full of beautiful and interesting things."

M.: What you consider to be filled with beautiful and interesting things is indeed the dull and ignorant state of sleep, according to the *Jnani: Ya nisha sarva bhootanam tasyam jagrati samyami*.

The wise one is wide awake just where darkness rules for others. You must certainly wake up from the sleep which is holding you at present.

18th January, 1939

Talk 608.

Mrs. Hick Riddingh wrote two questions on a slip of paper and asked Sri Bhagavan if her interpretations were correct.

M.: The Self is beyond ignorance and knowledge. It is Absolute. These doubts do not arise to the Self for it is Pure Consciousness and cannot admit of dark ignorance.

D.: From our point of view they arise.

M.: See to whom they arise. Go to their root. See if they arise after you reach their source and hold on to it.

D.: But at the present moment -

M.: Such discussions are theoretical and there will be no end to them. One must be practical and try to solve the problems for oneself by the method suggested. The method has been pointed out already. Find out to whom the questions arise. They resolve themselves immediately.

Talk 609.

Lady Bateman and others came to the hall at about 3-30 p.m. In a few minutes she asked in writing if one is nearer to Pure Consciousness in deep sleep than in the waking state.

M.: The sleep, dream and waking states are mere phenomena appearing on the Self which is itself stationary and also a state of simple awareness. Can anyone remain away from the Self at any moment? This question can arise only if that were possible.

D.: Is it not often said that one is nearer Pure Consciousness in deep slumber than in the waking state?

M.: The question may as well be: Am I nearer to myself in my sleep than in my waking state?

For the Self is Pure Consciousness. No one can ever be away from the Self. The question is possible only if there is duality. But there is no duality in the state of Pure Consciousness.

The same person sleeps, dreams and wakes up. The waking state is considered to be full of beautiful and interesting things. The absence of such experiences makes one say that the sleep state is

dull. Before we proceed further let us make this point clear. Do you not admit that you exist in your sleep?

D.: Yes, I do.

M.: You are the same person that is now awake. Is it not so?

D.: Yes.

M.: So there is a continuity in the sleep and the waking states. What is that continuity? It is only the state of Pure Being.

There is a difference in the two states. What is that difference? The incidents, namely, the body, the world and the objects appear in the waking state but they disappear in sleep.

D.: But I am not aware in my sleep.

M.: True, there is no awareness of the body or of the world. But you must exist in your sleep in order to say now "I was not aware in my sleep". Who says so now? It is the wakeful person. The sleeper cannot say so. That is to say, the individual who is now identifying the Self with the body says that such awareness did not exist in sleep.

Because you identify yourself with the body, you see the world around you and say that the waking state is filled with beautiful and interesting things. The sleep state appears dull because you were not there as an individual and therefore these things were not. But what is the fact? There is the continuity of Being in all the three states, but no continuity of the individual and the objects.

D.: Yes.

M.: That which is continuous is also enduring, *i.e*. permanent. That which is discontinuous is transitory.

D.: Yes.

M.: Therefore the state of Being is permanent and the body and the world are not. They are fleeting phenomena passing on the screen of Being-Consciousness which is eternal and stationary.

D.: Relatively speaking, is not the sleep state nearer to Pure Consciousness than the waking state?

M.: Yes, in this sense: When passing from sleep to waking the 'I' thought must start; the mind comes into play; thoughts arise; and then the functions of the body come into operation; all these together

make us say that we are awake. The absence of all this evolution is the characteristic of sleep and therefore it is nearer to Pure Consciousness than the waking state.

But one should not therefore desire to be always in sleep. In the first place it is impossible, for it will necessarily alternate with the other states. Secondly it cannot be the state of bliss in which the *jnani* is, for his state is permanent and not alternating. Moreover, the sleep state is not recognised to be one of awareness by people, but the sage is always aware. Thus the sleep state differs from the state in which the sage is established.

Still more, the sleep state is free from thoughts and their impression to the individual. It cannot be altered by one's will because effort is impossible in that condition. Although nearer to Pure Consciousness, it is not fit for efforts to realise the Self.

The incentive to realise can arise only in the waking state and efforts can also be made only when one is awake. We learn that the thoughts in the waking state form the obstacle to gaining the stillness of sleep. "Be still and know that I AM God". So stillness is the aim of the seeker. Even a single effort to still at least a single thought even for a trice goes a long way to reach the state of quiescence. Effort is required and it is possible in the waking state only. There is the effort here: there is awareness also; the thoughts are stilled; so there is the peace of sleep gained. That is the state of the *jnani*. It is neither sleep nor waking but intermediate between the two. There is the awareness of the waking state and the stillness of sleep. It is called *jagrat-sushupti*. Call it wakeful sleep or sleeping wakefulness or sleepless waking or wakeless sleep. It is not the same as sleep or waking separately. It is *atijagrat*[1] (beyond wakefulness) or *atisushupti*[2] (beyond sleep). It is the state of perfect awareness and of perfect stillness combined. It lies between sleep and waking; it is also the interval between two successive thoughts. It is the source from which thoughts spring; we see that when we wake up from sleep. In other words thoughts have their origin in the stillness of sleep. The thoughts make all the difference between the stillness of sleep and the turmoil of waking. Go to the

1. *Jagrat of jagrat*.

2 .'Sleep of sleep'. It is beyond *jagrat* and sleep as well as in them.

root of the thoughts and you reach the stillness of sleep. But you reach it in the full vigour of search, that is, with perfect awareness.

That is again *jagrat-sushupti* spoken of before. It is not dullness; but it is Bliss. It is not transitory but it is eternal. From that the thoughts proceed. What are all our experiences but thoughts? Pleasure and pain are mere thoughts. They are within ourselves. If you are free from thoughts and yet aware, you are That Perfect Being.

Lady Bateman appreciated the discourse and thanked Sri Bhagavan. Later, she said that she would be leaving the next day.

Sri Bhagavan smiled and said: You do not leave one place for another. You are always stationary. The scenes go past you. Even from the ordinary point of view you sit in your cabin and the ship sails but you do not move. We see a picture of a man running several miles and rushing towards us but the screen does not move. It is the picture that moves on and away.

D.: I see, but I can understand it only after I realise the Self.

M.: The Self is always realised. Were Realisation something to be gained hereafter there is an equal chance of its being lost. It will thus be only transitory. Transitory bliss brings pain in its train. It cannot be liberation which is eternal.

Were it true that you realise it later it means that you are not realised now. Absence of Realisation of the present moment may be repeated at any moment in the future, for Time is infinite. So too, such realisation is impermanent. But that is not true. It is wrong to consider Realisation to be impermanent. It is the True Eternal State which cannot change.

D.: Yes, I shall understand it in course of time.

M.: You are already That. Time and space cannot affect the Self. They are in you; so also all that you see around you are in you. There is a story to illustrate this point: A lady had a precious necklace round her neck. Once in her excitement she forgot it and thought that the necklace was lost. She became anxious and looked for it in her home but could not find it. She asked her friends and neighbours if they knew anything about the necklace. They did not. At last a kind friend of hers told her to feel the necklace round the neck. She found that it had all along been round her neck and she was happy! When others asked her later

if she found the necklace which was lost, she said, "Yes, I have found it." She still felt that she had recovered a lost jewel.

Now did she lose it at all? It was all along round her neck. But judge her feelings. She is happy as if she had recovered a lost jewel. Similarly with us, we imagine that we would realise that Self some time, whereas we are never anything but the Self.

D.: I feel that I am transplanted into some other land than the earth.

Sri Bhagavan, while looking into some correspondence, heard it, smiled and said: This is the Kingdom of Heaven. The Kingdom of Heaven mentioned in the Bible and this world are not two different regions. "The Kingdom is within you," says the Bible. So it is. The realised being sees this as the Kingdom of Heaven whereas the others see it as 'this world'. The difference lies only in the angles of vision.

D.: How can we deny the world and the people therein? I hear some music. It is sweet and grand. I recognise it to be Wagner's music. I cannot claim it to be mine.

M.: Does Wagner or his music exist apart from you? Unless you are there to say that it is Wagner's music, can you be aware of it? Without being aware of it, can it be said to exist? To make it more clear, do you recognise Wagner's music in your deep sleep? And yet you admit that you exist in sleep. So it is clear that Wagner and music are only your thoughts. They are in you and not out of you.

D.: It is beautiful.

[*Compiler's remarks:* Everyone is apt to be confused from time to time. Although the truth is heard and understood, at times it is forgotten, and mistakes are committed when facts face the person. Knowledge gives place to ignorance and confusion is the result. But the sage alone can give the right turn to our thoughts from time to time. That is the necessity for *Satsanga i.e.*, association with the Wise.]

Talk 610.

A devotee came with these questions.

1. Since individual souls and the Brahman are one, what is the cause of this creation?

2. Is the Brahma-*jnani* liable to bodily pains and rebirth? Can he extend his span of life or curtail it?

M.: The object of creation is to remove the confusion of your individuality. The question shows that you have identified yourself with the body and therefore see yourself and the world around. You think that you are the body. Your mind and intellect are the factors of your wrong identity.

Do you exist in your sleep?

D.: I do.

M.: The same being is now awake and asks these questions. Is it not so?

D.: Yes.

M.: These questions did not arise in your sleep. Did they?

D.: No.

M.: Why not? Because you did not see your body and no thoughts arose. You did not identify yourself with the body then. Therefore these questions did not arise.

They arise now because of your identity with the body. Is it not so?

D.: Yes.

M.: Now see which is your real nature. Is it that which is free from thoughts or that which is full of thoughts?

Being is continuous. The thoughts are discontinuous. So which is permanent?

D.: Being.

M.: That is it. Realise it. That is your true nature. Your nature is simple Being, free from thoughts.

Because you identify yourself with the body you want to know about creation. The world and the objects including your body appear in the waking state but disappear in the state of sleep. You exist all through these states. What is it then that persists through all these states? Find it out. That is your Self.

D.: Supposing it is found, what then?

M.: Find it out and see. There is no use asking hypothetical questions.

D.: Am I then one with Brahman?

M.: Leave Brahman alone. Find who you are. Brahman can take care of Himself.

If you cease to identify yourself with the body no questions regarding creation, birth, death, etc., will arise. They did not arise in your sleep. Similarly they will not arise in the true state of the Self.

The object of creation is thus clear, that you should proceed from where you find yourself and realise your true Being

You could not raise the question in your sleep because there is no creation there. You raise the question now because your thoughts appear and there is creation. Creation is thus found to be only your thoughts.

Take care of yourself and the Brahma-*jnani* will take care of Himself. If you know your true nature, you will understand the state of Brahma-*jnana*. It is futile to explain it now. Because you think that you see a *jnani* before you and you identify him with a body just as you have identified yourself with yours, you also think that he feels pains and pleasures like yourself.

D.: But I must know if he is a *jnani* for I must be inspired by him.

M.: Yes, he tells you; he inspires. Do as he tells you. You want to learn and not test him.

Jnana lakshanas are stated in the *sastras* to be an incentive to a seeker to get rid of misery and seek happiness. The methods are given. If they are followed the result will be *jnana* having those *lakshanas*. They are not meant for testing others.

Talk 611.

D.: I think that the soul is the light within. If after death it becomes one with Brahman how can there be transmigration of soul?

M.: Within whom? Who dies?

D.: I shall then frame my question in a different way.

M.: Dialectics are not wanted. Consider the answer and see.

D.: How?

M.: Now that you identify yourself with the body you say that the soul is the light within. You mean that there is light within the body.

Think a little and say if the body can raise any questions. It is insentient and cannot say 'I'. Something else says 'I'. What is it? Can it be the Self? The Self is pure and is not aware of any other

so as to be able to say 'I'. Who then says 'I'? It is the link between the pure *Chit* (the Self) and the *jada* (the body). That is the ego. Who are you now? What is it that is born? The Self is eternal and cannot be born. The body appears and disappears and your identity with it makes you speak of birth and death. See if the true significance of 'I' can ever take birth. For whom is transmigration?

D.: Sir, we are here to have our doubts cleared.

M.: Certainly.

D.: Our doubts can be cleared only when we ask questions.

M.: Yes. No one objects to questions being asked.

D.: It is said *pariprasnena sevaya* (by questioning again and again and by service). So we should ask questions and the Master should kindly remove our doubts.

M.: Continue your quotation *upadekshyanti tattvam* (They give instructions in Truth).

D.: Yes. But our doubts must be cleared.

M.: So it was with Arjuna. For he says in the end *nashto mohah smritirlabdha* (lost is my ignorance; memory restored).

D.: It was in the end. Before then he asked so many questions.

M.: The Truth was revealed even at the start. For the very first sloka of Sri Krishna's *upadesa* starts: "No birth and no death, no change, etc."

D.: Sri Krishna also says, "We have had many rebirths. I am aware of them; but you are not."

M.: That was only because the question arose how Sri Krishna could claim to have taught the eternal Truth to Aditya. The Truth was stated even at the start. Arjuna did not understand it. The *jnani's* state was later described and also the means of attainment. Incidentally Sri Krishna said that the Truth was eternal and that He had originally taught the same to Aditya. Arjuna was all along identifying himself with the body and therefore thought that Sri Krishna also was the body in front of him. He therefore asked, "How can it be? You (Sri Krishna) were born of Devaki some years before. Aditya was among those who started creation. How could you have taught this Truth to Aditya?"

Sri Krishna continues to answer Arjuna's questions in that strain: "Many rebirths we have had. I know them all; but you do not," and so on.

D.: We must also know the Truth.

M.: You are taught the Truth. Instructions have been given. See who you are. That is the whole instruction.

19th January, 1939

Talk 612.

Mrs. Hick Riddingh asked Sri Bhagavan in writing:

When Bhagavan writes about the help given towards attaining Self-Realisation by the gracious glance of the Master or looking upon the Master, how exactly is this to be understood?"

M.: Who is the Master? Who is the seeker?

D.: The Self.

M.: If the Self be the Master and also the seeker, how can the questions arise at all?

D.: That is just my difficulty. I must seek the Self within myself. What is then the significance of the writing above referred to? It seems contradictory.

M.: It is not. The statement has not been rightly understood.

If the seeker knows the Master to be the Self he sees no duality in other respects either and is therefore happy, so that no questions arise for him.

But the seeker does not bring the truth of the statement to bear in practice. It is because of his ignorance. This ignorance is however unreal. The Master is required to wake up the seeker from the slumber of ignorance and he therefore uses these words in order to make Reality clear to others.

The only thing that matters is that you see the Self. This. can be done wherever you remain. The Self must be sought within. The search must be steadfast. If that is gained there is no need to stay near the Master as a physical being.

The 'statement' is meant for those who cannot find the Self remaining where they are.

Mr. Ward Jackson: The lady's difficulty is real and I sympathise with her. She asks, "If we could see the Self within ourselves, why should we have come all the way to see Him? We had been thinking of Him so long and it is only right that we came here. Is it then unnecessary to do so?"

M.: You have done well in having come. "*Isvaro gururatmeti*" (The Self is the God and Guru). A person seeks happiness and learns that God alone can make one happy. He prays to God and worships Him. God hears his prayers, and responds by appearing in human shape as a Master in order to speak the language of the devotee and make him understand the Reality. The Master is thus God manifest as human being. He gives out His experience so that the seeker might also gain it. His experience is to abide as the Self. The Self is within. God, Master and the Self are therefore seeming stages in the Realisation of the Truth. You have doubts on reading books. You have come here to have them cleared. That is only right.

Mrs. H. R.: I understand the Self to be the Master and must be sought within. So I can do it where I live.

M.: The understanding has been theoretical. When it is put into practice difficulties and doubts arise. If you can feel the presence of the Master where you are, your doubts are readily overcome, for the Master's part consists in removing the doubts of the seeker.

The purpose of your visit is fulfilled if the doubts do not arise hereafter, and you apply yourself steadily in the search for the Self.

D.: I understand it all along.

M.: Good. The objection is not to your conclusion but it is to your doubts.

Mr. W. J.: When we read about it we read it intellectually. But it is all too remote. When we see you in body we are brought nearer to Reality and it gives us courage to bring our knowledge into our everyday life.

If one realised the Self and acted up to it in the West, one would be locked up in a lunatic asylum. (Laughter.)

M.: You will be locking yourself in. Because the world is mad, considers you mad. Where is the lunatic asylum if it is not within. You will not be in it, but it will be in you. (Laughter).

Uncertainties, doubts and fears are natural to everyone until the Self is realised. They are inseparable from the ego, rather they are the ego.

D.: How are they to disappear?

M.: They are the ego. If the ego goes they go with it. The ego is itself unreal. What is the ego? Enquire. The body is insentient and cannot say 'I' . The Self is pure consciousness and non-dual. It cannot say 'I' . No one says, 'I' in sleep. What is the ego then? It is something intermediate between the inert body and the Self. It has no *locus standi*. If sought for it vanishes like a ghost. You see, a man imagines that there is something by his side in darkness; it may be some dark object. If he looks closely the ghost is not to be seen, but some dark object which he could identify as a tree or a post, etc. If he does not look closely the ghost strikes terror in the person. All that is required is only to look closely and the ghost vanishes. The ghost was never there. So also with the ego. It is an intangible link between the body and Pure Consciousness. It is not real. So long as one does not look closely it continues to give trouble. But when one looks for it, it is found not to exist.

Again, in a Hindu marriage function, the feasts continue five or six days. A stranger was mistaken for the best man by the bride's party and they therefore treated him with special regard. Seeing him treated with special regard by the bride's party, the bridegroom's party considered him to be some man of importance related to the bride's party and therefore they too showed him special respect. The stranger had altogether a happy time of it. He was also all along aware of the real situation. On one occasion the groom's party wanted to refer to him on some point. They asked for him. He scented trouble and made himself scarce. So it is with the ego. If looked for, it disappears. If not, it continues to give trouble.

How it is to be looked for is learnt from those who have already done so. That is the reason why the Master is approached.

D.: If the search has to be made within, is it necessary to be in the physical proximity of the Master?

M.: It is necessary to do so until all doubts are at an end.

D.: If the ego is unreal and troublesome why did we take so much pains to develop it?

M.: Its growth and the trouble consequent on such growth make you look for the cause of it all. Its development is for its own destruction.

D.: Is it not said that one must be like a child before one advances spiritually?

M.: Yes, because the ego is not developed in the child.

D.: I mean exactly the same. We could have remained like the child instead of having developed the ego.

M.: The state of the child is meant. No one can take lessons from the child for the Realisation of the Self. The Master's state is like the state of the child. There is a difference between the two. The ego is potential in the child, whereas it is totally destroyed in the saint.

D.: Yes, I see, I understand it now.

M.: The Reality is alone and eternal. To understand it is good enough. But the old ignorance should not return. A good watch must be kept lest the present understanding of the Truth suffers later on.

A disciple served a master a long time and realised the Self. He was in Bliss and wanted to express his gratitude to the master. He was in tears of joy and his voice choked when he spoke. He said, "What a wonder that I did not know my very Self all these years? I suffered long and you so graciously helped me to realise the Self. How shall I repay your Grace? It is not in my power to do it!" The master replied: "Well, well. Your repayment consists in not lapsing into ignorance over again but in continuing in the state of your real Self."

[*Compiler's remarks:* The Self is the Master and all else. The Realisation of the Self means Self-surrender or merging into the Master. What more can anyone do? That is the highest form of gratitude to the Master].

21st January, 1939

Talk 613.

A young man asked: "Are thoughts mere matter?"

M.: What do you mean? Do you mean 'matter' like the things you see around you?

D.: Yes - gross.

M.: Who asks this question? Who is the thinker?

D.: The thinker is spirit.

M.: Do you then mean that spirit generates matter?

D.: I want to know.

M.: How do you distinguish between matter and spirit?

D.: Spirit is consciousness and the other not.

M.: Can consciousness generate non-consciousness, or light darkness?

24th January, 1939

Talk 614.

There were a few respectable men in the hall. Sri Bhagavan spoke to them some time after their arrival. Where is the use of trying to remember the past or discover the future? That which matters is only the present. Take care of it and the other things will take care of themselves.

D.: Is it bad to desire something?

M.: One should not be elated on having his desire fulfilled or disappointed on being frustrated. To be elated on the fulfilment of desire is so deceitful. A gain will certainly be lost ultimately. Therefore elation must end in pain at a future date. One should not give place to feelings of pleasure or pain, come what may. How do the events affect the person? You do not grow by acquiring something nor wither away by losing it. You remain what you always are.

D.: We worldly men cannot resist desire.

M.: You may desire but be prepared for any eventuality. Make effort, but do not be lost in the result. Accept with equanimity whatever happens. For pleasure and pain are mere mental modes. They have no relation to the objective realities.

D.: How?

M.: There were two young friends in a village in South India. They were learned and wanted to earn something with which they might afford relief to their respective families. They took leave of their parents and went to Benares on a pilgrimage. On the way one of them died. The other was left alone. He wandered for a time, and in the course of a few months he made a good name and earned some money. He wanted to earn more before he returned to his home. In the meantime he met

a pilgrim who was going south and would pass through the native village of the young pandit. He requested the new acquaintance to tell his parents that he would return after a few months with some funds and also that his companion had died on the way. The man came to the village and found the parents. He gave them the news, but changed the names of the two men. Consequently the parents of the living man bemoaned his supposed loss and the parents of the dead man were happy expecting the return of their son bringing rich funds as well.

You see therefore that pleasure and pain have no relation to the actualities but are mere mental modes.

Talk 615.

Another from the group asked: How is the ego to be destroyed?

M.: Hold the ego first and then ask how it is to be destroyed. Who asks this question? It is the ego. Can the ego ever agree to kill itself? This question is a sure way to cherish the ego and not to kill it. If you seek the ego you will find it does not exist. That is the way to destroy it.

In this connection I am often reminded of a funny incident which took place when I was living in the West Chitrai Street in Madura. A neighbour in an adjoining house anticipated the visit of a thief to his house. He took precautions to catch him. He posted policemen in mufti to guard the two ends of the lane, the entrance and the back-door to his own house. The thief came as expected and the men rushed to catch him. He took in the situation at a glance and shouted "Hold him, hold him. There - he runs - there - there." Saying so he made good his escape.

So it is with the ego. Look for it and it will not be found. That is the way to get rid of it.

23rd to 28th January, 1939

Talk 616.

D.: Is the *Jivanadi* an entity or a figment of the imagination?

M.: The *yogis* say that there is a *nadi* called the *jivanadi*, *atmanadi* or *paranadi*. The Upanishads speak of a centre from which thousands of *nadis* branch off. Some locate such a centre in the brain and others in other centres. The *Garbhopanishad* traces the formation of the foetus and the growth of the child in the womb. The *jiva* is

considered to enter the child through the fontanelle in the seventh month of its growth. In evidence thereof it is pointed out that the fontanelle is tender in a baby and is also seen to pulsate. It takes some months for it to ossify. Thus the *jiva* comes from above, enters through the fontanelle and works through the thousands of the *nadis* which are spread over the whole body. Therefore the seeker of Truth must concentrate on the *sahasrara*, that is the brain, in order to regain his source. *Pranayama* is said to help the *yogi* to rouse the *Kundalini Sakti* which lies coiled in the solar plexus. The *sakti* rises through a nerve called the *Sushumna*, which is imbedded in the core of the spinal cord and extends to the brain.

If one concentrates on the *Sahasrara* there is no doubt that the ecstasy of *samadhi* ensues. The *vasanas*, that is the latencies, are not however destroyed. The *yogi* is therefore bound to wake up from the *samadhi*, because release from bondage has not yet been accomplished. He must still try to eradicate the *vasanas* in order that the latencies yet inherent in him may not disturb the peace of his *samadhi*. So he passes down from the *sahasrara* to the heart through what is called the *jivanadi*, which is only a continuation of the *Sushumna*. The *Sushumna* is thus a curve. It starts from the solar plexus, rises through the spinal cord to the brain and from there bends down and ends in the heart. When the *yogi* has reached the heart, the *samadhi* becomes permanent. Thus we see that the heart is the final centre.

Some Upanishads also speak of 101 nadis which spread from the heart, one of them being the vital *nadi*. If the *jiva* comes down from above and gets reflected in the brain, as the *yogis* say, there must be a reflecting surface in action. That must also be capable of limiting the Infinite Consciousness to the limits of the body. In short the Universal Being becomes limited as a *jiva*. Such reflecting medium is furnished by the aggregate of the *vasanas* of the individual. It acts like the water in a pot which reflects the image of an object. If the pot be drained of its water there will be no reflection. The object will remain without being reflected. The object here is the Universal Being-Consciousness which is all-pervading and therefore immanent in all. It need not be cognised by reflection alone; it is self-resplendent. Therefore the seeker's aim must be to drain away the *vasanas* from the heart and let no reflection obstruct the Light of Eternal Consciousness. This is

achieved by the search for the origin of the ego and by diving into the heart. This is the direct method for Self-Realisation. One who adopts it need not worry about *nadis*, the brain, the *Sushumna*, the *Paranadi*, the *Kundalini, pranayama* or the six centres.

The Self does not come from anywhere else and enter the body through the crown of the head. It is as it is, ever sparkling, ever steady, unmoving and unchanging. The changes which are noticed are not inherent in the Self which abides in the Heart and is self-luminous like the Sun. The changes are seen in Its Light. The relation between the Self and the body or the mind may be compared to that of a clear crystal and its background. If the crystal is placed against a red flower, it shines red; if placed against a green leaf it shines green, and so on. The individual confines himself to the limits of the changeful body or of the mind which derives its existence from the unchanging Self. All that is necessary is to give up this mistaken identity, and that done, the ever-shining Self will be seen to be the single non-dual Reality.

The reflection of Consciousness is said to be in the subtle body (*sukshma sarira*), which appears to be composed of the brain and the nerves radiating from it to all parts of the trunk, chiefly through the spinal column and the solar plexus.

When I was on the Hill, Nayana (Kavyakantha Ganapathi Muni) once argued that the brain was the seat of the *vasanas*, because it consisted of innumerable cells in which the *vasanas* were contained and illuminated by the light of the Self which projected from the heart. Only this set a person working or thinking.

But I said, "How can it be so? The *vasanas* must be with one's Self and can never remain away from the Self. If, as you say, the *vasanas* be contained in the brain and the Heart is the seat of the Self, a person who is decapitated must be rid of his *vasanas* and should not be reborn. You agree that it is absurd. Now can you say that the Self is in the brain with the *vasanas*? If so, why should the head bend down when one falls asleep? Moreover a person does not touch his head and say 'I'. Therefore it follows that the Self is in the Heart and the *vasanas* are also there in an exceedingly subtle form.

"When the *vasanas* are projected from the Heart they are associated with the Light of the Self and the person is said to think. The

vasanas which lie imbedded in an atomic condition grow in size in their passage from the heart to the brain. The brain is the screen on which the images of the *vasanas* are thrown and it is also the place of their functional distribution. The brain is the seat of the mind, and the mind works through it."

So then this is what happens. When a *vasana* is released and it comes into play, it is associated with the light of the Self. It passes from the heart to the brain and on its way it grows more and more until it holds the field all alone and all the *vasanas* are thus kept in abeyance for the time being. When the thought is reflected in the brain it appears as an image on a screen. The person is then said to have a clear perception of things. He is a great thinker or discoverer. Neither the thought that is extolled as being original, nor the thing, nor the country which is claimed to be a new discovery, is really original or new. It could not manifest unless it was already in the mind. It was of course very subtle and remained imperceptible, because it lay repressed by the more urgent or insistent thoughts or *vasanas*. When they have spent themselves this thought arises and by concentration the Light of the Self makes it clear, so that it appears magnificent, original and revolutionary. In fact it was only within all along.

This concentration is called *samyamana* in the Yoga *Sastras*. One's desires can be fulfilled by this process and it is said to be a *siddhi*. It is how the so-called new discoveries are made. Even worlds can be created in this manner. *Samyamana* leads to all *siddhis*. But they do not manifest so long as the ego lasts. Concentration according to yoga ends in the destruction of the experiencer (ego), experience and the world, and then the quondam desires get fulfilled in due course. This concentration bestows on individuals even the powers of creating new worlds. It is illustrated in the *Aindava Upakhyana* in the *Yoga Vasishta* and in the *Ganda Saila Loka* in the *Tripura Rahasya.*

Although the powers appear to be wonderful to those who do not possess them, yet they are only transient. It is useless to aspire for that which is transient. All these wonders are contained in the one changeless Self. The world is thus within and not without. This meaning is contained in verses 11 and 12 - Chapter V of *Sri Ramana Gita* "The entire Universe is condensed in the body, and the entire body in the

Heart. Thus the Heart is the nucleus of the whole Universe." Therefore *Samyamana* relates to concentration on different parts of the body for the different *siddhis.* Also the *Visva* or the *Virat* is said to contain the cosmos within the limits of the body. Again, "The world is not other than the mind, the mind is not other than the Heart; that is the whole truth." So the Heart comprises all. This is what is taught to Svetaketu by the illustration of the seed of a fig tree. The source is a point without any dimensions. It expands as the cosmos on the one hand and as Infinite Bliss on the other. That point is the pivot. From it a single *vasana* starts, multiplies as the experiencer 'I', experience, and the world. The experiencer and the source are referred to in the *mantra*. Two birds, exactly alike, arise simultaneously.

When I was staying in the Skandasramam I sometimes used to go out and sit on a rock. On one such occasion there were two or three others with me including Rangaswami Iyengar. Suddenly we noticed some small moth-like insect shooting up like a rocket into the air from a crevice in the rock. Within the twinkling of an eye it had multiplied itself into millions of moths which formed a cloud and hid the sky from view. We wondered at it and examined the place from which it shot up. We found that it was only a pinhole and knew that so many insects could not have issued from it in such a short time.

That is how *ahankara* (ego) shoots up like a rocket and instantaneously spreads out as the Universe.

The Heart is therefore the centre. A person can never be away from it. If he is he is already dead. Although the Upanishads say that the *jiva* functions through other centres on different occasions, yet he does not relinquish the Heart. The centres are simply places of business (vide *Vedanta Chudamani*). The Self is bound to the Heart, like a cow tethered to a peg. The movements are controlled by the length of the rope. All its wanderings centre around the peg.

A caterpillar crawls on a blade of grass and when it has come to the end, it seeks another support. While doing so it holds on with its hind-legs to the blade of grass, lifts the body and sways to and fro before it can hold another. Similarly it is with the Self. It stays in the Heart and holds other centres also according to circumstances. But its activities always centre round the Heart.

Talk 617.

There are five states for the individual. They are: (1) *Jagrat*, (2) *Swapna*, (3) *Sushupti*, (4) *Turiya*, (5) *Turyatita*. Of these the *jagrat* is the waking state.

In it the *jiva* in the *Visva* aspect and the Lord in the *Virat* aspect, abiding together in the eight petals of the Heart lotus, function through the eyes and enjoy novel pleasures from various objects by means of all the senses, organs, etc. The five gross elements which are widespread, the ten senses, the five vital airs, the four inner faculties, the twenty-four fundamentals - all these together form the gross body. The *jagrat* state is characterised by *satva guna* denoted by the letter *A* and presided over by the deity Vishnu. The *swapna* is the dream state in which the *jiva* in the *Taijasa* aspect and the Lord in the *Hiranyagarbha* aspect, abiding together in the corolla of the Heart-Lotus, function in the neck and experience through the mind the results of the impressions collected in the waking state. All the principles, the five gross elements, the will and the intellect, seventeen in all, together form the subtle body of the dream which is characterised by the *rajo guna* denoted by the letter *U* and presided over by the deity Brahma, so say the wise.

The *sushupti* is the state of deep sleep in which the *jiva* in the *Prajna* aspect and the Lord in the *Isvara* aspect, abiding together in the stamen of the Heart-Lotus, experience the bliss of the Supreme by means of the subtle *avidya* (nescience). Just as a hen after roaming about in the day calls the chicks to her, enfolds them under her wings and goes to rest for the night, so also the subtle individual being, after finishing the experiences of the *jagrat* and *swapna* for the time being, enters with the impressions gathered during those states into the causal body which is made up of nescience, characterised by *tamo guna*, denoted by the letter *M* and presided over by the deity Rudra.

Deep sleep is nothing but the experience of pure *being*. The three states go by different names, such as the three regions, the three forts, the three deities, etc. The being always abides in the Heart, as stated above. If in the *jagrat* state the Heart is not relinquished, the mental activities are stilled and Brahman alone is contemplated, the state is called the *Turiya*. Again when the individual being merges in the Supreme it is called the *turyatita*. The vegetable kingdom is always in *sushupti*; the

animals have both *swapna* and *sushupti*; the gods (celestials) are always in *jagrat*; man has all the three states; but the clear-sighted yogi abides only in *turiya*, and the highest yogi remains in *turyatita* alone.

The three states alternate involuntarily for the average man. The last two (*turiya* and *turyatita*) are however the results of practice and form clear aids to liberation. Of the other three states (*Jagrat, swapna* and *sushupti*) each one is exclusive of the other two and limited by the conditions of time and space. They are therefore unreal.

Our very experience of the *jagrat* and the *swapna* states proves that the Consciousness as the Self underlies all the five states, remains perfect all along and witnesses all of them. But with regard to similar consciousness in the deep sleep, every person is known to say "I was not aware of anything; I slept soundly and happily". Two facts emerge from the statement (unawareness of anything and the happiness of sound sleep). Unless these existed and were experienced in sleep they could not find expression by the same person in the waking state. Inference also leads to the same conclusion. Just as the eye sees the darkness which remains enveloping all objects, so also the Self sees the darkness of nescience which remained covering the phenomenal world.

This darkness was experienced when it (the Self) emerged in dots of supreme bliss, shone a trice and fleeted away in such fine subtlety as the rays of the moon which peer through the waving foliage. The experience was however not through any media (such as the senses of the mind), but bears out the fact that consciousness does exist in deep sleep. The unawareness is owing to the absence of relative knowledge, and the happiness to the absence of (seething) thoughts.

If the experience of bliss in deep sleep is a fact, how is it that no one among all the human beings recollects it? A diver who has found the desired thing under water cannot make his discovery known to the expectant persons on the shore until he emerges from the water. Similarly the sleeper cannot express his experience because he cannot contact the organs of expression until he is awakened by his *vasanas* in due course. Therefore it follows that the Self is the light of *Sat, Chit, Ananda*.

Visva, *Taijasa* and *Prajna* are the denominations of the experiencer in the waking, dream and deep sleep states respectively. The same individual

underlies all of them. They do not therefore represent the True Self which is pure *Sat, Chit, Ananda*. The experience in deep sleep was said to be the bliss of Brahman. It is only the negative aspect of such bliss, as it is the result of the absence of thoughts. Moreover it is transitory. Such a bliss is only the *abhasa*, the counterfeit of Supreme Bliss. It is not different from the blissful feeling of sensual pleasures. In deep sleep the *Prajna* is said to be united with the Self. So the individuality is potential in sleep.

The Self is the basis of all the experiences. It remains as the witness and the support of them all. The Reality is thus different from the three states, the waking, the dream and the deep sleep.

1st February, 1939

Talk 618.

A gentleman from Hardwar: When I go on analysing myself I go beyond the intellect, and then there is no happiness.

M.: Intellect is only an instrument of the Self. It cannot help you to know what is beyond itself.

D.: I understand it. But there is no happiness beyond it.

M.: The intellect is the instrument wherewith to know unknown things. But you are already known, being the Self which is itself knowledge; so you do not become the object of knowledge. The intellect makes you see things outside, and not that which is its own source.

D.: The question is repeated.

M.: The intellect is useful thus far, it helps you to analyse yourself, and no further. It must then be merged into the ego, and the source of the ego must be sought. If that be done the ego disappears. Remain as that source and then the ego does not arise

D.: There is no happiness in that state.

M.: 'There is no happiness' is only a thought. The Self is bliss, pure and simple. You are the Self. So you cannot but be bliss; being so, you cannot say here is no happiness. That which says so cannot be the Self; it is the non-Self and must be got rid of in order to realise the bliss of the Self.

D.: How is that to be done?

M.: See wherefrom the thought arises. It is the mind. See for whom the mind or intellect functions. For the ego. Merge the intellect in the ego and seek the source of the ego. The ego disappears. 'I know' and 'I do not know' imply a subject and an object. They are due to duality. The Self is pure and absolute, One and alone. There are no two selves so that one may know the other. What is duality then? It cannot be the Self which is One and alone. It must be non-Self. Duality is the characteristic of the ego. When thoughts arise duality is present; know it to be the ego, and seek its source.

The degree of the absence of thoughts is the measure of your progress towards Self-Realisation. But Self-Realisation itself does not admit of progress; it is ever the same. The Self remains always in realisation. The obstacles are thoughts. Progress is measured by the degree of removal of the obstacles to understanding that the Self is always realised. So thoughts must be checked by seeking to whom they arise. So you go to their Source, where they do not arise.

D.: Doubts are always arising. Hence my question.

M.: A doubt arises and is cleared; another arises and that is cleared, making way for another, and so it goes on. So there is no possibility of clearing away all doubts. See to *whom* the doubts arise. Go to their source and abide in it. Then they cease to arise. That is how doubts are to be cleared. *Atma samstham manah krtva na kinchidapi chintayet*.

D.: Grace alone can help me to it.

M.: Grace is not exterior. In fact your very desire for grace is due to grace that is already in you.

Talk 619.

An Andhra gentleman read out a verse from the *Viveka Chudamani* setting forth the sense of the *Maitreyi Brahmana* of the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* and asked the meaning of *atma* which occurred there.

M.: The Self.

D.: Is not *prema* (love) for something else?

M.: The desire for happiness (*sukha prema*) is a proof of the ever-existing happiness of the Self. Otherwise how can desire for it arise in you? If headache was natural to human beings no one would try

to get rid of it. But everyone that has a headache tries to get rid of it, because he has known a time when he had no headache. He desires only that which is natural to him. So too he desires happiness because happiness is natural to him. Being natural, it is not acquired. Man's attempts can only be to get rid of misery. If that be done the ever-present bliss is felt. The primal bliss is obscured by the non-self which is synonymous with non-bliss or misery. *Duhkha nasam = sukha prapti*. (Loss of unhappiness amounts to gain of happiness.) Happiness mixed with misery is only misery. When misery is eliminated then the ever-present bliss is said to be gained. Pleasure which ends in pain is misery. Man wants to eschew such pleasure. Pleasures are *priya, moda* and *pra-moda.* When a desired object is near at hand there arises *priya*: when it is taken possession of *moda* arises; when it is being enjoyed *pra-moda* prevails. The reason for the pleasureableness of these states is that *one thought excludes all others, and then this single thought also merges into the Self*. These states are enjoyed in the *Anandamaya kosa* only. As a rule *Vijnanamaya kosa* prevails on waking. In deep sleep all thoughts disappear and the state of obscuration is one of bliss; there the prevailing body is the *Anandamaya*. These are sheaths and not the core, which is interior to all these. It lies beyond waking, dream and deep sleep. That is the Reality and consists of true bliss (*nijananda*).

D.: Is not *hatha* yoga necessary for the inquiry into the Self?

M.: Each one finds some one method suitable to himself, because of latent tendencies (*purva samskara*).

D.: Can *hatha* yoga be accomplished at my age?

M.: Why do you think of all that? Because you think it exterior to yourself you desire it and try for it. But do you not exist all along? Why do you leave yourself and go after something external?

D.: It is said in *Aparoksha-anubhuti* that *hatha* yoga is a necessary aid for inquiry into the Self.

M.: The *hatha* yogis claim to keep the body fit so that the enquiry may be effected without obstacles. They also say that life must be prolonged so that the enquiry may be carried to a successful end. Furthermore there are those who use some medicines (*kayakalpa*) with that end in view. Their favourite example is: the screen must

be perfect before the painting is begun. Yes, but *which is the screen and which the painting*? According to them the body is the screen and the inquiry into the Self is the painting. But is not the body itself a picture on the screen, the Self?

D.: But *hatha* yoga is so much spoken of as an aid.

M.: Yes. Even great pandits well versed in the Vedanta continue the practice of it. Otherwise their minds will not subside. So you may say it is useful for those who cannot otherwise still the mind.

D.: Saguna upasana (worship of the personal God) is said to be imperfect. It is also said that *nirguna upasana* (devotion to the impersonal) is hard and risky. I am fit for the former only. What is to be done?

M.: The *Saguna* merges into the *nirguna* in the long run. The *saguna* purifies the mind and takes one to the final goal. The afflicted one, the seeker of knowledge, and the seeker of gains are all dear to God. *But the jnani is the Self of God*.

Talk 620.

D.: "Not this - not this". That is the teaching to the seeker. He is told that the Self is Supreme. How is it to be found?

M.: The Self is said to be the hearer, thinker, knower, etc. But that is not all. It is also described as the ear of ear, the mind of mind, etc.; and by what means to know the knower?

D.: But this does not say what the Self is.

M.: "Not this - not this".

D.: It only negates.

M.: (Silence).

The devotee complains that the Self is not pointed out.

M.: A man wants to know what he is. He sees animals and objects around him. He is told: 'You are not a cow, not a horse, not a tree, not this, not that, and so on'. If again the man asks saying 'You have not said what I am,' the answer will be, 'It is not said you are not a man'. He must find out for himself that he is a man. So you must find out for yourself what you are.

You are told, 'You are not this body, nor the mind, nor the intellect, nor the ego, nor anything you can think of; find out what truly you are'. Silence denotes that the questioner is himself the Self that is to be found. In a *svayamvara* the maiden goes on saying 'no' to each one until she faces her choice and then she looks downwards and remains silent.

Talk 621.

Mr. Raj Krishna found Sri Bhagavan alone on the Hill at about 5-30 p.m. and prayed: I have been desiring since my tenth year to have a glimpse of the Reality. I firmly believe that I can be helped in this only by a sage like Sri Bhagavan. So I pray for Thy help.

Sri Bhagavan looked at him for a few minutes. The devotee interrupted, saying: "Even if I cannot realise in my life let me at least not forget it on my death bed: let me have a glimpse at least at the moment of death so that it may stand me in good stead in the future."

M.: It is said in the Bhagavad Gita, Ch. VIII, that whatever may be the last thought at death, it determines the later birth of the person. It is necessary to experience the Reality now in life in order that it may be experienced at death. See if this moment be different from the last one, and try to be in that desired state.

D.: I have limitations. I am unable to rise to the occasion. Grace can achieve for me what I cannot achieve myself.

M.: True, but unless there is grace this desire will not arise.

They were walking slowly, conversing at the same time. The devotee said: "There is a girl of eleven in Lahore. She is very remarkable. She says she can call upon Krishna twice and remain conscious, but if she calls the third time she becomes unconscious and remains in trance for ten hours continuously."

M.: So long as you think that Krishna is different from you, you call upon Him. Falling into trance denotes the transitoriness of the *samadhi*. You are always in *samadhi; that is what should be realised*.

D.: God-vision is glorious.

M.: God-vision is only vision of the Self objectified as the God of one's own faith. Know the Self.

Talk 622.

Sri Bhagavan has a bandage on his finger. Someone asked, "What is that?" Bhagavan replied: "The finger came upon a knife". (The Knife is inert, and relative to it the finger is a conscious agent).

Talk 623.

Sri Bhagavan said to another devotee that there are five states:

(1) Sleep, (2) Before waking, a state free from thoughts, (3) Sense of happiness of that freedom from thoughts (*rasasvada*), (4) The internal movement of the *vasanas* (*kashaya*) and (5) Complete waking with (distraction) *vikshepa*. The second of those should be made permanent.

4th February, 1939

Talk 624.

A devotee asked Sri Bhagavan: With every thought the subject and the object appear and disappear. Does not the 'I' disappear when the subject disappears thus? If that be so how can the quest of the 'I' proceed?

M.: The subject (knower) is only a mode of mind. Though the mode (*vritti*) passes, the reality behind it does not cease. The background of the mode is the 'I' in which the mind modes arise and sink.

D.: After describing the Self as *srota* (hearer), *manta* (thinker), *vijnata* (knower), etc., it is again described as *asrota, amanta, avijnata*, non-hearer, non-thinker, non-knower, Is it so?

M.: Just so. The common man is aware of himself only when modifications arise in the intellect (*vijnanamaya kosa*); these modifications are transient; they arise and set. Hence the *vijnanamaya* (intellect) is called a *kosa* or sheath. When pure awareness is left over it is itself the *Chit* (Self) or the Supreme. To be in one's natural state on the subsidence of thoughts is bliss; if that bliss be transient - arising and setting - then it is only the *sheath* of bliss (*Anandamaya kosa*), not the pure Self. What is needed is to fix the attention on the pure 'I' after the subsidence of all thoughts and not to lose hold of it. This has to be described as an extremely subtle thought; else it cannot be spoken of at all, since it is no other than the Real Self. Who is to speak of it, to whom and how?

This is well explained in the *Kaivalyam* and the *Viveka Chudamani*. Thus though in sleep the awareness of the Self is not lost, the ignorance of the *jiva* is not affected by it. For this ignorance to be destroyed this subtle state of mind (*vrittijnanam*) is necessary; in the sunshine cotton does not burn; but if the cotton be placed under a lens it catches fire and is consumed by the rays of the Sun passing through the lens. So too, though the awareness of the Self is present at all times, it is not inimical to ignorance. If by meditation the subtle state of thought is won, then ignorance is destroyed. Also in *Viveka Chudamani: ativa sukshmam paramatma tattvam na sthoola drishtya* (the exceedingly subtle Supreme Self cannot be seen by the gross eye) and *esha svayam jyotirasesha sakshi* (this is Self-shining and witnesses all).

This subtle mental state is not a modification of mind called *vritti*. Because the mental states are of two kinds. One is the *natural state* and the other is a transformation into forms of objects. The first is the truth, and the other is according to the doer (*kartru-tantra*). When the latter perishes, *jale kataka renuvat* (like the clearing nut paste in water) the former will remain over.

The means for this end is meditation. Though this is with the triad of distinction (*triputi*) it will finally end in pure awareness (*jnanam*) Meditation needs effort: *jnanam* is effortless. Meditation can be done, or not done, or wrongly done, *jnanam* is not so. Meditation is described as *kartru-tantra* (as doer's own), *jnanam* as *vastu-tantra* (the Supreme's own).

7th February, 1939

Talk 625.

Miss Merston, an English lady visitor: I have read *Who am I*? While inquiring who the 'I' is, I cannot hold it for any length of time. Secondly, I have no interest in the environment, but yet I have hopes that I shall find some interest in life.

M.: If there are no interests it is good. (The interpreter points out that the questioner hopes to find some interest in life).

M.: That means there are those *vasanas*. A dreamer dreams a dream. He sees the dream world with pleasures, pains. etc. But he wakes up and then loses all interest in the dream world. So it is with the

waking world also. Just as the dream-world, being only a part of yourself and not different from you, ceases to interest you, so also the present world would cease to interest you if you awake from this waking dream (*samsara*) and realise that it is a part of your Self, and not an objective reality.

Because you think that you are apart from the objects around you, you desire a thing. But if you understand that the thing was only a thought-form you would no longer desire it.

All things are like bubbles on water. You are the water and the objects are the bubbles. They cannot exist apart from the water, but they are not quite the same as the water.

D.: I feel I am like froth.

M.: Cease that identification with the unreal and know your real identity. Then you will be firm and no doubts can arise.

D.: But I *am* the froth.

M.: Because you think that way there is worry. It is a wrong imagination. Accept your true identity with the Real. Be the water and not the froth. That is done by diving in.

D.: If I dive in, I shall find.....

M.: But even without diving in, *you are That*. The ideas of exterior and interior exist only so long as you do not accept your real identity.

D.: But I took the idea from you that you want me to dive in.

M.: Yes, quite right. It was said because you are identifying yourself with the froth and not the water. Because of this confusion the answer was meant to draw your attention to this confusion and bring it home to you. All that is meant is that the Self is infinite inclusive of all that you see. There is nothing beyond It nor apart from It. Knowing this, you will not desire anything; not desiring, you will be content.

The Self is always realised. There is no seeking to realise what is already - always - realised. For you cannot deny your own existence. That existence is consciousness - the Self.

Unless you exist you cannot ask questions. So you must admit your own existence. That existence is the Self. It is already realised.

Therefore the effort to realise results only in your realising your present mistake - that you have not realised your Self. There is no fresh realisation. The Self becomes revealed.

D.: That will take some years.

M.: Why years? The idea of time is only in your mind. It is not in the Self. There is no time for the Self. Time arises as an idea after the ego arises. But you are the Self beyond time and space; you exist even in the absence of time and space.

9th February, 1939

Talk 626.

Another devotee: Is it not that the 'I' exists only in relation to a 'this' (*aham - idam*)?

M.: 'I', 'this' appear together now. But 'this' is contained (*vyaptam*) in the 'I' - they are not apart. 'This' has to merge into and become one with 'I'. The 'I' that remains over is the true 'I'.

Talk 627.

D.: What is staying with the Guru?

M.: It means studying the sacred lore.

D.: But there is the special virtue of the Guru's presence.

M.: Yes. That purifies the mind.

D.: That is the effect or reward. I asked about how the disciple ought to behave.

M.: That differs according to the type of disciple - student, householder, what are his own ingrained mental tendencies and so on.

D.: If so, will it naturally come out right?

M.: Yes. In former times the Rishis sent their sons to others for education.

D.: Why?

M.: Because affection stood in the way.

D.: That cannot be for the *jnanis*. Was it in respect of the disciples?

M.: Yes.

D.: If so would not this obstacle get removed along with all the others, through the Master's grace?

M.: There will be delay. Owing to the disciple's want of reverence, grace may become effective only after a long time.

It is said that awaking from ignorance is like awaking from a fearful dream of a beast. It is thus. There are two taints of mind, namely veiling and restlessness (*avarana* and *vikshepa*). Of the two, the former is evil, the latter is not so. So long as the veiling effect of sleep persists there is the frightful dream; on awaking the veiling ceases; and there is no more fear. Restlessness is not a bar to happiness. To get rid of the restlessness caused by the world, one seeks the restlessness (activity) of being with the Guru, studying the sacred books and worshipping God with forms, and by these awakening is attained.

What happens in the end? Karna was ever the son of Kunti. The tenth man was such all along. Rama was Vishnu all the time. Such is *jnanam*. It is being aware of That which always is.

13th February, 1939

Talk 628.

After his return from Europe, Mr. D. had a private interview with Sri Bhagavan for a few minutes. He said that his former visit had had some effect but not as much as he wanted. He could concentrate on his work. Is not concentration indispensable for spiritual progress? Karma appealed to him because that helped towards concentration.

Sri Bhagavan: There is no karma without a *karta* (doer). On seeking for the doer he disappears. Where is Karma then?

Mr. D. sought practical instruction.

M.: Seek the *karta*. That is the practice.

Mrs. D. said there were breaks in her awareness and desired to know how the awareness might be made continuous.

M.: Breaks are due to thoughts. You cannot be aware of breaks unless you think so. It is only a thought. Repeat the old practice, "To whom do thoughts arise?" Keep up the practice until there are no breaks. Practice alone will bring about continuity of awareness.

17th February, 1939

Talk 629.

This is Sivaratri day. Sri Bhagavan was beaming with Grace in the evening. A *Sadhaka* raised the following question:

D.: Enquiry into the Self seems to take one into the subtle body (*ativahika sariram* or *puriashtakam* or *jivatma*). Am I right?

M.: They are different names for the same state, but they are used according to the different points of view. After some time *puriashtakam* (the eight fold subtle body) will disappear and there will be the '*Eka*' (one) only.

Vritti jnana alone can destroy '*ajnana*' (ignorance). Absolute *jnana* is not inimical to *ajnana.*

There are two kinds of *vrittis* (modes of mind). (1) *vishaya vritti* (objective) and (2) *atma vritti* (subjective). The first must give place to the second.

That is the aim of *abhyasa* (practice), which takes one first to the *puriashtaka* and then to the One Self.

Talk 630.

In the course of conversation a devotee said in passing: Sivaprakasam Pillai, who is such a good man, such an ardent devotee and a longstanding disciple, has written a poem saying that Sri Bhagavan's instructions could not be carried out by him effectively in practice. What can be the lot of others then?

M.: Sri Acharya also says similar things when he composes songs in praise of any deity. How else can they praise God?

Saying this Sri Bhagavan smiled.

Talk 631.

The *Sadhaka* repeated his question in a different way:

D.: The enquiry into the Self seems to lead to the *ativahika*, the *puriashtaka* or the *jivatma*. Is it right?

M.: Yes. It is called '*sarira*' (body or abode, city or individual, *puri* or *jiva* according to the outlook). They are the same.

Vritti-jnanam is usually associated with objective phenomena. When these cease there remains the *atma-vritti* or the subjective *vritti* that is the same as *jnanam.* Without it *ajnanam* will not cease. The *puriashtaka* also will not be found associated with anything outside, and the Self will shine forth uniform and harmonious.

18th February, 1939

Talk 632.

Mr. Satyanarayana Rao, a teacher in Vellore Mahant School, is a well-known devotee of Sri Maharshi. He has been ailing from a cancer of the gullet and the doctors have no hopes for him. He has been given a room in the Asramam and the Sarvadhikari is very kind to him. It is now about two months and the patient is very weak.

At about 9 a.m., Sri Bhagavan was reading the *tapals*. The brother of the patient appeared in the hall with an anxious look to ask Sri Bhagavan about the patient, who was gasping. The Sarvadhikari also came to the hall on behalf of the sufferer. Sri Bhagavan continued to read the *tapals.* In a few minutes another devotee also came there for the same purpose. Sri Bhagavan asked: Did you call the doctor?

D.: Yes, but he is too busy in the hospital.

M.: What can I do? (After a short time) They will be pleased if I go there.

Soon Bhagavan left the hall and went to the patient's side, massaged him gently and placed His hand on the heart and the other on his head. The patient, whose tongue was protruding, mouth open and eyes fixed, showed signs of relief and in about twenty minutes gently murmured, "Oh Help of the helpless, how I have troubled Thee! What return can I make for this kindness?" The people felt relieved. Sri Bhagavan returned to the hall. Someone offered soap and water to Sri Bhagavan to wash his hands. *But he declined them and rubbed His hands over His body*. However the patient passed away a few days later.

A well-known devotee remarked: "Sri Bhagavan appears so unconcerned under all circumstances. But He is all along so loving and gracious."

23rd February, 1939

Talk 633.

A visitor from Dindigul said: I suffer in both mind and body. From the day of my birth I have never had happiness. My mother too suffered from the time she conceived me, I hear. Why do I suffer thus? I have not sinned in this life. Is all this due to the sins of past lives?

M.: If there should be unrelieved suffering all the time, who would seek happiness? That is, if suffering be the natural state, how can the desire to be happy arise at all? However the desire does arise. So to be happy is natural; all else is unnatural. Suffering is not desired, only because it comes and goes.

The questioner repeated his complaint.

M.: You say the mind and body suffer. But do they ask the questions? *Who is the questioner*? Is it not the one that is beyond both mind and body?

You say the body suffers in *this* life; the cause of this is the previous life: its cause is the one before it, and so on. So, like the case of the *seed and the sprout*, there is no end to the causal series. It has to be said that all the lives have their first cause in ignorance. That same ignorance is present even now, framing this question. That ignorance must be removed by *jnanam*.

"Why and to whom did this suffering come?" If you question thus you will find that the 'I' is separate from the mind and body, that the Self is the only eternal being, and that It is eternal bliss. That is *jnanam*.

D.: But why should there be suffering now?

M.: If there were no suffering how could the desire to be happy arise? If that desire did not arise how would the Quest of the Self be successful?

D.: Then is all suffering good?

M.: Quite so. What is happiness? Is it a healthy and handsome body, timely meals, and the like? Even an emperor has troubles without end though he may be healthy. So all suffering is due to the false notion "I am the body". Getting rid of it is *jnanam*.

Talk 634.

An Andhra gentleman, retired from Government Service, asked: "I have been doing *omkara upasana* for long. In the left ear I am always hearing a sound. It is like the piping of a *nadasvaram* (pipe). Even now I hear it. Some luminous visions are also seen. I do not know what I should do."

M.: There must be one to hear sounds or see visions. That one is the 'I'. If you seek it, asking "Who am I?" the subject and objects would coalesce. After that there is no quest. Till then thought will arise, things will appear and disappear; you ask yourself what has happened, and what will happen. If the subject be known then the objects will merge in the subject. If without that knowledge, one applies the mind to objects, because these objects appear and disappear, and one does not know that one's true nature is that which remains over as the Self. On the vanishing of objects, fear arises. That is, the mind being bound to objects there is suffering when the objects are absent. But they are transient and the Self is eternal. If the eternal Self be known subject and object merge into one, and the One without a second will shine.

D.: Is there the merger of the *Omkara*?

M.: Om is the eternal truth. That which remains over after the disappearance of objects is *Om*. It does not merge in anything. It is the State of which it is said: "Where one sees none other, hears none other, knows none other, that is Perfection." *Yatra nanyat pasyati, nanyat srunoti, nanyat vijanati sa bhuma*? All the *upasanas* are ways to winning it. One must not get stuck in the *upasanas*, but must query "Who am I?" and find the Self.

D.: I have no pleasure in the house. There remains nothing for me to do in the family. I have finished doing what I had to do. Now there are grandsons and granddaughters. May I remain in the house, or should I leave it and go away?

M.: You should stay just where you are now. But where are you now? Are you in the house, or is the house in you? Is there any house apart from you? If you get fixed in your own place, you will see all things have merged into you, and there will be no cause for such questions as these.

D.: Yes. Then it seems as if I may remain at home.

M.: You must remain in your real state.

Talk 635.

An Andhra gentleman of Hospet has returned from pilgrimage to Kailas, Amarnath, etc. He described how fine those places are and how difficult the journey was. He finally asked for something to remind him of Maharshi, meaning some instruction.

M.: You have been to Kailas etc. Have you been to Muktinath?

D.: No. It was too difficult a journey for me. I have however been in Nepal. Have you been to those places?

M.: No, no. I mentioned Muktinath casually.

Then Sri Bhagavan remarked: "To go to Kailas and return is just a new birth. For there the body-idea drops off."

Talk 636.

Mrs. Kelly Hack asked if the waking and the dream states might be imagined to be excursions from the natural state of the Self.

M.: There must be a place for excursions. The place must also lie outside oneself. It is not possible in the true nature of the Self.

D.: But I meant that it might be imagined to be so.

M.: One might as well imagine the true nature of the Self

D.: The illustration of the screen is very beautiful.

M.: The cinema screen is not sentient and so requires a seer, whereas the screen of the Self includes the seer and the seen - rather, it is full of light.

The pictures of the cinema-show cannot be seen without the help of darkness, for you cannot have a show in broad daylight. Similarly, the mind thinks thoughts and sees objects owing to an underlying ignorance (*avidya*). The Self is pure knowledge, pure light where there is no duality. Duality implies ignorance. The Knowledge of the Self is beyond relative knowledge and ignorance, the Light of the Self is beyond the ordinary light and darkness. The Self is all alone.

Talk 637.

There was some question about progress.

Sri Bhagavan said that progress is for the mind and not for the Self. The Self is ever perfect.

2nd March, 1939

Talk 638.

For the last few days a rule is in force by which the visitors are not allowed to enter the hall between 12 noon and 2-30 p.m. A few Muslim visitors came to the Asramam in the interval today. The attendant promptly told them that they should not disturb Sri Bhagavan's rest at this hour. Sri Bhagavan quietly got down from the sofa and came out of the hall; He sat on the stone pavement adjoining the wall and asked the visitors also to sit close to Him. He went on reading a newspaper and also laid Himself on the stone. He was finally requested to go in.

Talk 639.

While speaking to Mr. K. L. Sarma of Pudukotah, Sri Bhagavan said: Leaving out what is intimate and immediate, why should one seek the rest? The scriptures say "That Thou art". In this statement 'Thou' is directly experienced; but leaving it out they go on seeking 'That'!

D.: In order to find the oneness of 'That' and of 'Thou'.

M.: 'Thou' is the Inner Self immanent in all; in order to find the same, he leaves himself out and sees the world objectively. What is the world? What is Immanent in it? It is 'That'. All such ideas arise only on forgetting one's own Self. I never bothered myself with such matters. Only after a time it occurred to me that men had investigated such matters.

3rd March, 1939

Talk 640.

At about 4 p.m. Sri Bhagavan, who was writing something intently, turned His eyes slowly towards the window to the north; He closed the fountain pen with the cap and put it in its case: He closed the notebook and put it aside; He removed the spectacles, folded them in the case and left them aside. He leaned back a little, looked up overhead, turned His face this way and that; and looked here and there. He passed His hand over His face and looked contemplative. Then He turned to someone in the hall and said softly:

M.: The pair of sparrows just came here and complained to me that their nest had been removed. I looked up and found their nest

missing." Then He called for the attendant, Madhava Swami, and asked: "Madhava, did anyone remove the sparrows' nest?

The attendant, who walked in leisurely, answered with an air of unconcern: "I removed the nests as often as they were built. I removed the last one this very afternoon."

M.: That's it. That is why the sparrows complained. The poor little ones! How they take the pieces of straw and shreds in their tiny beaks and struggle to build their nests!

Attendant: But, why should they build here, over our heads?

M.: Well - well. Let us see who succeeds in the end (After a short time Sri Bhagavan went out).

Talk 641.

Explaining the opening stanza of the *Sad Vidya*, Sri Bhagavan observed: The world is always apparent to everyone. All must know "I and this world exist". On enquiry "do these always exist?" and "if indeed real, they must remain even unrelated to time, space and differentiation; are they so?" It is evident that only in the waking and dream states these are perceived but not in deep sleep. Therefore 'I' and the world appear sometimes and disappear also. They are created, have their being and later vanish. Whence do they arise? Wherein do they remain? Where do they go on vanishing from view? Can such phenomena be admitted to be real?

Furthermore, I and the world, objects of creation, sustenance and destruction, are perceived in the waking and dream states only and not in deep sleep. How does deep sleep differ from the other two states? In sleep there are no thoughts whereas in the other two states there are. There the thoughts must be the origin of the 'I' and the world.

Now what about thoughts? They cannot be natural; otherwise they cannot appear at one moment and disappear at another. Wherefrom do they arise? Their source, ever-present and not subject to variations, must be admitted to be. It must be the eternal state as said in the *upadesa mantra* - That from which all beings come forth, that in which they remain and that into which they resolve.

This stanza is not in praise or adoration but only an expression of the Reality.

Talk 642.

Mr. K. L. Sarma asked:

Svasvarupanusandhanam bhaktirityabhidhiyate.

Again - *Svatmatattvanusadhanam bhaktirityapare joguh*.

What is the difference between the two?

M.: The former is *vichara* - Who am I? (*Koham?*) It represents *jnana*.

The latter is *dhyana* - Whence am I? (*Kutoham?*) This admits a *jivatma* which seeks the *Paramatma*.

Talk 643.

An elderly, learned Andhra asked: "Are the two methods Karma *marga* and *jnana marga* separate and independent of each other? Or is the Karma *marga* only a preliminary which after successful practice should be followed by *jnana marga* for the consummation of the aim? The Karma advocates non-attachment to action and yet an active life, whereas the *jnana* means renunciation. What is the true meaning of renunciation? Subjugation of lust, passion, greed, etc., is common to all and forms the essential preliminary step for any course. Does not freedom from passions indicate renunciation? Or is renunciation different, meaning cessation of the active life? These questions are troubling me and I beg lights to be thrown on those doubts."

Bhagavan smiled and said: "You have said all. Your question contains the answer also. Freedom from passions is the essential requisite. When that is accomplished all else is accomplished."

D.: Sri Sankara emphasises the *jnana marga* and renunciation as preliminary to it. But there are clearly two methods *dwividha* mentioned in the Gita. They are Karma and *Jnana* (*Lokesmin dwividha nishtha*...).

M.: Sri Acharya has commented on the Gita and on that passage also.

D.: The Gita seems to emphasise Karma. For Arjuna is persuaded to fight; Sri Krishna Himself set the example by an active life of great exploits.

M.: The Gita starts saying that you are not the body, that you are not therefore the *karta*.

D.: What is the significance?

M.: That one should act without thinking that oneself is the actor. The actions go on despite his egolessness. The person has come into manifestation for a certain purpose. That purpose will be accomplished whether he considers himself the actor or not.

D.: What is Karma yoga? Is it non-attachment to Karma or its fruit?

M.: Karma yoga is that yoga in which the person does not arrogate to himself the function of being the actor. The actions go on automatically.

D.: Is it the non-attachment to the fruits of actions?

M.: The question arises only if there is the actor. It is being all along said that you should not consider yourself the actor.

D.: So Karma yoga is *kartrtva buddhi rahita karma* - action without the sense of doership.

M.: Yes. Quite so.

D.: The Gita teaches active life from beginning to end.

M.: Yes, the actor-less action.

D.: Is it then necessary to leave the home and lead a life of renunciation?

M.: Is the home in you? Or are you in the home?

D.: It is in my mind.

M.: Then what becomes of you when you leave the physical environment?

D.: Now I see. Renunciation is only action without the sense of being the *karta*.

Is there not action for a *jivanmukta*?

M.: Who raises the question? Is he a *jivanmukta* or another?

D.: Not a *jivanmukta*.

M.: Let the question be raised after *jivanmukti* is gained if it is found necessary. *Mukti* is admitted to be freedom from the mental activities also. Can a *mukta* think of action?

D.: Even if he gives up the action, the action will not leave him. Is it not so?

M.: With what is he identified in order that this question might apply?

D.: Yes, I see all right. My doubts are now cleared.

Talk 644.

A District Official, a Muslim: What is the necessity for reincarnation?

M.: Let us first see if there is incarnation before we speak of reincarnation.

D.: How?

M.: Are you now incarnated that you speak of reincarnation?

D.: Yes. Certainly. An amoeba developed into higher organisms until the human being has been evolved. This is now the perfection in development. Why should there be further reincarnation?

M.: Who is to set limits to this theory of evolution?

D.: Physically it is perfect. But for the soul, further development may be required which will happen after the death of the man.

M.: Who is the man? Is he the body or the soul?

D.: Both put together.

M.: Do you not exist in the absence of the body?

D.: How do you mean? It is impossible.

M.: What was your state in deep sleep?

D.: Sleep is temporary death. I was unconscious and therefore I cannot say what the state was.

M.: But you existed in sleep. Did you not?

D.: In sleep the soul leaves the body and goes out somewhere. Then it returns to the body before waking. It is therefore temporary death.

M.: A man who is dead never returns to say that he died, whereas the man who had slept says that he slept.

D.: Because this is temporary death.

M.: If death is temporary and life is temporary, what is it that is real?

D.: What is meant by the question?

M.: If life and death be temporary, there must be something which is not temporary. Reality is that which is not temporary.

D.: There is nothing real. Everything is temporary. Everything is *maya*.

M.: On what does *maya* appear?

D.: Now I see you; it is all *maya*.

M.: If everything is *maya*, how does any question arise?

D.: Why should there be reincarnation?

M.: For whom?

D.: For the perfect human being.

M.: If you are perfect, why do you fear to be reborn? It indicates imperfection.

D.: Not that I fear. But you say that I must be reborn.

M.: Who says it? You are asking the question.

D.: What I mean is this. You are a Perfect Being; I am a sinner. You tell me that I being a sinner must be reborn in order to perfect myself?

M.: No, I do not say so. On the other hand I say that you have no birth and therefore no death.

D.: Do you mean to say that I was not born?

M.: Yes, you are now thinking that you are the body and therefore confuse yourself with its birth and death. But you are not the body and you have no birth and death.

D.: Do you not uphold the theory of rebirth?

M.: No. On the other hand, I want to remove your confusion that you will be reborn. It is you who think that you will be reborn.

See for whom this question arises. Unless the questioner is found, the questions can never be set at rest.

D.: This is no answer to my question.

M.: On the other hand, this is the answer to elucidate the point and all other doubts as well.

D.: This will not satisfy all others.

M.: Leave others alone. If you take care of yourself others can take care of themselves.

Silence followed. He left in a few minutes apparently dissatisfied with the discourse.

Sri Bhagavan said after a few minutes: This will work in him. The discourse will have its effect.

He does not admit any Reality. Well - who is it that has determined everything to be unreal? Otherwise the determination also becomes unreal.

The theory of evolution is enlarged upon by the person in this state. Where is it, if not in his mind?

To say that the soul must be perfected after death, the soul must be admitted to exist. Therefore the body is not the person. It is the soul.

To explain evolution Sri Bhagavan continued:

One sees an edifice in his dream. It rises up all of a sudden. Then he begins to think how it should have been already built brick by brick by so many labourers during such a long time. Yet he does not see the builders working. So also with the theory of evolution. Because he finds himself a man he thinks that he has developed to that stage from the primal state of the amoeba.

Another devotee: It is an illustration of the saying that he sees the universe full of cause and effect *Visram pasyati karyakaranataya*.

M.: Yes. The man always traces an effect to a cause, there must be a cause for the cause, the argument becomes interminable. Relating the effect to a cause makes the man think. He is finally driven to consider who he is himself. When he knows the Self there is Perfect Peace. It is for that consummation that man is evolved.

Later in the evening, another devotee said to Sri Bhagavan that the Muslim official continued to speak of the same topic to the Municipal Commissioner.

Then Sri Bhagavan said: He says that body and soul together form the man. But I ask what is the state of the man in deep sleep. The body is not aware whereas the man is there all along.

D.: But he says that sleep is temporary death.

M.: Yes, so he says. But he qualifies the word death by the word temporary, so that the man returns to the body. How does he find the body to re-enter it? Moreover, he is sure to return. That means that he must exist to return to the body or to claim the body for himself.

The scriptures however say that the *prana* protects the body in sleep. For when the body lies on the floor, a wolf or a tiger may feed on it. The animal sniffs and feels that there is life within and therefore does not feed on it as on a corpse. That again shows that there is someone in the body to protect it in deep sleep.

General remarks by Sri Bhagavan:

All knowledge is meant only to lead the person to the realisation of the Self. The scriptures or religions are well-known to be for

that purpose. What do they all mean? Leave alone what they say of the past or of the future; for it is only speculative. But the present existence is within the experience of all. Realise the pure Being. There is an end to all discourses and disputes.

But the intellect of man does not easily take to this course. It is only rarely that a man becomes introverted. The intellect delights in investigating the past and the future but does not look to the present.

D.: Because it must lose itself if it sank within in search of the Self. But the other investigation gives it not only a lease of life but also food for growth.

M.: Yes. Quite so. Why is intellect developed? It has a purpose. The purpose is that it should show the way to realise the Self. It must be put to that use.

12th March, 1939

Talk 645.

A man of about 30, of good appearance came to the hall with a few companions. The man abruptly began: "To say 'I-I' cannot help anyone to reach the goal. How can 'I' be pointed out?"

M.: It must be found within. It is not an object so that it may be shown by one to another.

D.: When the instruction to find the 'I' is given, the instruction must be made complete by showing what it is.

M.: The instruction here amounts to direction only. It depends on the seeker to use the direction.

D.: The seeker is ignorant and seeks instruction.

M.: He is therefore guided to find the Truth.

D.: But it is not enough. The 'I' must be pointed out specifically.

The man assumed an aggressive attitude and did not listen. Sri Bhagavan tried to explain, but he would not allow Sri Bhagavan to do so.

Finally Sri Bhagavan said: This is not the attitude of the seeker. When someone teaches humility to the seeker, he will reach the way and not till then.

The chanting of the Vedas began.

The conversation was casually referred to by a devotee present.

Sri Bhagavan again said: The seeker must listen and try to understand. If on the other hand he wants to prove me, let him do so by all means. I do not argue.

The man again began: "My attitude was not properly understood. I want to know the 'I'. It must be pointed out to me."

But he displayed considerable malice. The others did not like it and so tried to bring him round. He became worse. Sri Bhagavan finally said: "Go back the way you came. Do it externally or internally, as it suits you."

The man grew excited and others also were equally excited. He was finally led out of the hall and sent away.

Later it was learnt that the man was an adherent of yoga and that he used to abuse all other methods. He used to vilify *jnana* and the *jnanis*.

At night, after supper, Sri Bhagavan spoke of one Govinda Yogi, a Malayali Brahmin pandit of some repute, who used to extol yoga and vilify the other methods. He always cited the Gita, the Upanishads, etc., to support his statements. Others, *e.g.*, Sri Narayana Guru, used to refute him on the same grounds.

Later Sri Bhagavan spoke appreciating the amiability of Amritanatha. He is a great *tapasvi*, who had made considerable *japa*. He had fed the poor on many occasions in many places. He could easily gain the goodwill of others including great men like Sir P. Ramanathan and Pandit Malaviya.

13th March, 1939

Talk 646.

Sri Bhagavan referred to the following passage of Gandhiji in the *Harijan* of the 11th instant:

> "How mysterious are the ways of God! This journey to Rajkot is a wonder even to me. Why am I going, whither am I going? What for? I have thought nothing about these things. And if God guides me, what should I think, why should I think? Even thought may be an obstacle in the way of His guidance.
>
> "The fact is, it takes no effort to stop thinking. The thoughts do *not* come. Indeed there is no vacuum - but I mean to say that there is no thought about the mission."

Sri Bhagavan remarked how true the words were and emphasised each statement in the extract. Then He cited Thayumanavar in support of the state which is free from thoughts:

> "Although I had often heard that all the *Srutis* declare the state of stillness to be one of Bliss, all Bliss - yet I continued to be ignorant. Again I did not follow the advice of my Lord - the Silent Master - because of my folly. I wandered in the forest of illusion: alas! it was my fate."
>
> "Bliss will reveal itself if one is still. Why then is this illusory yoga practice? Can it (*i.e.*, Bliss) be revealed by directing the intellect in a particular way? Do not say so, you who are given to the practice and are therefore an innocent babe."
>
> "The eternal Being is that state where you have disappeared. Are you not in it too? You, who cannot speak of it, do not be perplexed. Although you do not manifest, yet you are not lost. For you are eternal and also still. Do not be in pain. Here is Bliss - come on!"

15th March, 1939

Talk 647.

D.: Is not what Gandhiji describes, the state in which thoughts themselves become foreign?

M.: Yes, It is only after the rise of the 'I' thought that all other thoughts arise. The world is seen after you have felt "I am". The 'I-thought' and all other thoughts had vanished for him.

D.: Then the body-sense must be absent in that state.

M.: The body-sense also is a thought whereas he describes the state in which "thoughts do not come".

D.: He also says, "It takes no effort to stop thinking".

M.: Of course no effort is necessary to stop thoughts whereas one is necessary for bringing about thoughts.

D.: We are trying to stop thoughts. Gandhiji also says that thought is an obstacle to God's guidance. So it is the natural state. Though natural, yet how difficult to realise. They say that *sadhanas* are necessary and also that they are obstacles. We get confused.

M.: Sadhanas are needed so long as one has not realised it. They are for putting an end to obstacles. Finally there comes a stage when a person feels helpless notwithstanding the *sadhanas*. He is unable to pursue the much-cherished *sadhana* also. It is then that God's Power is realised. The Self reveals itself.

D.: If the state is natural, why does it not overcome the unnatural phases and assert itself over the rest?

M.: Is there anything besides that? Does anyone see anything besides the Self? One is always aware of the Self. So It is always Itself.

D.: It is said, because It shines forth, It is directly perceived. I understand from it that It becomes *pratyaksha* (directly perceived), because It is *pradeepta* (shining). Since it is not realised by us, I take it to be not shining. It is only *pradeepta* (shining), and hence admits of obstacles and goes under them. If the *atma* becomes *prakarshena deepta*, (very shining) it will shine over the rest. So it seems to be necessary to make it shine more.

M.: How can it be so? The Atma cannot be dull at one moment and blazing at another. It is unchanging and uniform.

D.: But Chudala says to Sikhidhvaja that she simply helped to trim the wick.

M.: That refers to *nididhyasana*.

By *sravana*, Knowledge dawns. That is the flame.

By *manana*, the Knowledge is not allowed to vanish. Just as the flame is protected by a wind-screen, so the other thoughts are not allowed to overwhelm the right knowledge.

By *nididhyasana*, the flame is kept up to burn bright by trimming the wick. Whenever other thoughts arise, the mind is turned inward to the light of true knowledge.

When this becomes natural, it is *samadhi*. The enquiry "Who am I?" is the *sravana*. The ascertainment of the true import of 'I' is the *manana*. The practical application on each occasion is *nididhyasana*. Being as 'I' is *samadhi*.

D.: Although we have heard it so often and so constantly yet we are unable to put the teaching into practise successfully. It must be due to weakness of mind. Is it possible that one's age is a bar?

M.: The mind is commonly said to be strong if it can think furiously. But here the mind is strong if it is free from thoughts. The yogis say that realisation can be had only before the age of thirty, but not the *jnanis.* For *jnana* does not cease to exist with age.

It is true that in the *Yoga Vasishta*, Vasishta says to Rama in the *Vairagya Prakarana* "You have this dispassion in your youth. It is admirable." But he did not say that *jnana* cannot be had in old age. There is nothing to prevent it in old age.

The *sadhak* must remain as the Self. If he cannot do so, he must ascertain the true meaning of the 'I' and constantly revert to it whenever other thoughts arise. That is the practice.

Some say that one must know the '*tat*' because the idea of the world constantly arises to deflect the mind. If the Reality behind it is first ascertained it will be found to be Brahman. The '*tvam*' is understood later. It is the *jiva*. Finally there will be *jivabrahmaikya* (union of the two).

But why all this? Can the world exist apart from the Self? The 'I' is always Brahman. Its identity need not be established by logic and practice. It is enough that one realises the Self. It is always the Brahman.

According to the other school, *nididhyasana* will be the thought *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am Brahman). That is diversion of thought to Brahman. No diversion should be allowed. Know the Self and there is an end of it.

No long process is necessary to know the Self. Is it to be pointed out by another? Does not everyone know that he exists? Even in utter darkness when he cannot see his hand, he answers a call and says "I am here".

D.: But that 'I' is the ego or the 'I-thought' and it is not the Absolute Self that answers the call or is otherwise aware of oneself.

M.: Even the ego can become aware of itself in the absence of light, sight, etc. Much more so should be the Pure Light of the Self.

I am saying that the Self is self-evident. One need not discuss the *tattvas* to find the Self. Some say there are twenty-four *tattvas*, others more and so on. Should we know the *tattvas*, before we admit the existence of the Self? The *sastras* dilate upon them in

order to point out that the Self is untouched by them. But for the seeker he can straightaway admit the Self and try to be That, without having recourse to the study of the *tattvas.*

D.: Gandhiji adhered to *satya* (Truth) so long and won realisation of the Self.

M.: What is *satya* except the Self? *Satya* is that which is made up of *sat.* Again *sat* is nothing but the Self. So Gandhiji's *satya* is only the Self.

Each one knows the Self but is yet ignorant. The person is enabled to realise only after hearing the *mahavakya.* Hence the Upanishadic text is the eternal Truth to which everyone who has realised owes his experience. After hearing the Self to be the Brahman the person finds the true import of the Self and reverts to it whenever he is diverted from it. Here is the whole process of Realisation.

17th March, 1939

Talk 648.

Sri Bhagavan said that Tatva Rayar was the first to pour forth Advaita philosophy in Tamil.

He had said that the Earth was his bed, his hands were his plates for taking food, the loin cloth was his clothing and thus there was no want for him.

In *Maharaja Turavu* (the renunciation of the king) he says: He was seated on the bare ground, the earth was his seat, the mind was the *chamara*; the sky was the canopy; and renunciation was his spouse:

Then Sri Bhagavan continued: I had no cloth spread on the floor in earlier days. I used to sit on the floor and lie on the ground. That is freedom. The sofa is a bondage. It is a gaol for me. I am not allowed to sit where and how I please. Is it not bondage?

One must be free to do as one pleases, and should not be served by others.

'No want' is the greatest bliss. It can be realised only by experience. Even an emperor is no match for a man with no want. The emperor has got vassals under him. But the other man is not aware of anyone beside the Self. Which is better?

18th March, 1939

Talk 649.

Mr. Thompson, a very quiet young gentleman who is staying in India for some years and studying Hindu Philosophy as an earnest student, asked:

Srimad Bhagavad Gita says: "I am the prop for Brahman." In another place, it says: "I am in the heart of each one." Thus the different aspects of the Ultimate Principle are revealed. I take it that there are three aspects, namely (1) the transcendental (2) the immanent and (3) the cosmic. Is Realisation to be in any one of these or in all of them? Coming to the transcendental from the cosmic, the Vedanta discards the names and forms as being *maya*. But I cannot readily appreciate it because a tree means the trunk, branches, leaves, etc. I cannot dismiss the leaves as *maya*. Again the Vedanta also says that the whole is Brahman as illustrated by gold and ornaments of gold. How are we to understand the Truth?

M.: The *Gita* says: *Brahmano hi pratishtaham*. If that '*aham*' is known, the whole is known.

D.: It is the immanent aspect only.

M.: You now think that you are an individual, there is the universe and that God is beyond the cosmos. So there is the idea of separateness. This idea must go. For God is not separate from you or the cosmos. The *Gita* also says:

> The Self am I, O Lord of Sleep,
> In every creature's heart enshrined.
> The rise and noon of every form,
> I am its final doom as well. *B. G., X. 20.*

Thus God is not only in the heart of all, He is the prop of all, He is the source of all, their abiding place and their end. All proceed from Him, have their stay in Him, and finally resolve into Him. Therefore He is not separate.

D.: How are we to understand this passage in the *Gita*:

"This whole cosmos forms a particle of Me."

M.: It does not mean that a small particle of God separates from Him and forms the Universe. His *Sakti* is acting; as a result of one phase of

such activity the cosmos has become manifest. Similarly, the statement in *Purusha Sukta*, "All the beings form His one foot (*Padosya viswa bhutani*) does not mean that Brahman is in four parts.

D.: I understand it. Brahman is certainly not divisible.

M.: So the fact is that Brahman is all and remains indivisible. He is ever realised. The man does not however know it. He must know it. Knowledge means the overcoming of obstacles which obstruct the revelation of the Eternal Truth that the Self is the same as Brahman. The obstacles form altogether your idea of separateness as an individual. Therefore the present attempt will result in the truth being revealed that the Self is not separate from Brahman.

22nd March, 1939

Talk 650.

An Andhra gentleman of middle age asked Sri Bhagavan how he should make his *japa*.

M.: The *japa* contains the word *namah*. It means that state in which the mind does not manifest apart from the Self. When the state is accomplished there will be an end of the *japa*. For the doer disappears and so also the action. The Eternal Being is alone left. *Japa* should be made until that state is reached. There is no escape from the Self. The doer will be automatically drawn into it. When once it is done the man cannot do anything else but remain merged in the Self.

D.: Will *bhakti* lead to *mukti*?

M.: Bhakti is not different from *mukti*. *Bhakti* is being as the Self (*Swarupa*). One is always that. He realises it by the means he adopts. What is *bhakti*? To think of God. That means: only one thought prevails to the exclusion of all other thoughts. That thought is of God which is the Self or it is the Self surrendered unto God. When He has taken you up nothing will assail you. The absence of thoughts is *bhakti*. It is also *mukti*.

The *jnana* method is said to be *vichara* (enquiry). That is nothing but 'supreme devotion' (*parabhakti*). The difference is in words only.

You think that *bhakti* is meditation on the Supreme Being. So long as there is *vibhakti* (the sense of separateness), *bhakti* (reunion) is

sought. The process will lead to the ultimate goal as is said in *Srimad Bhagavad Gita:*

arto jignasuh artharthi jnani cha Bharatarshabha
tesham jnani nityayukta ekabhaktir visishyate

— Ch. VII (l6, 17).

Any kind of meditation is good. But if the sense of separateness is lost and the object of meditation or the subject who meditates is alone left behind without anything else to know, it is *jnana. Jnana* is said to be *ekabhakti* (single-minded devotion). The *jnani* is the finality because he has become the Self and there is nothing more to do. He is also perfect and so fearless, *dwitiyat vai bhayam bhavati* - only the existence of a second gives rise to fear. This is *mukti*. It is also *bhakti*.

23rd March, 1939

Talk 651.

A. W. Chadwick is copying the English translation of the Tamil *Kaivalya Navaneeta*. When he came across some technical terms in it and felt some difficulty in understanding them, he asked Sri Bhagavan about them. Sri Bhagavan said: "Those portions deal with theories of creation. They are not material because the *Srutis* do not mean to set forth such theories. They mention the theories casually so that the enquirer may please himself if he be so inclined. The truth is that the world appears as a passing shadow in a flood of light. Light is necessary to see that shadow also. The shadow does not deserve any special notice, analysis or discussion. The book deals with the Self and that is its purpose. The discussions on creation may be omitted for the present."

Later, Sri Bhagavan continued: "The Vedanta says that the cosmos springs into view simultaneously with the seer. There is no detailed process of creation. This is said to be *yugapat srshti* (instantaneous creation). It is quite similar to the creations in dream where the experiencer springs up simultaneously with the objects of experience. When this is told, some people are not satisfied for they are so rooted in objective knowledge. They seek to find out how there can be sudden creation. They argue that an effect must be preceded by a cause. In short, they desire an explanation for the existence of the world which

they see around them. Then the *Srutis* try to satisfy their curiosity by such theories of creation. This method of dealing with the subject of creation is called *krama srshti* (gradual creation). But the true seeker can be content with *yugapat srshti* - instantaneous creation."

24th March, 1939

Talk 652.

A certain person had composed verses in praise of Sri Bhagavan. Therein the word *Avartapuri* occurs. Sri Bhagavan said that it means Tiruchuzhi, the birth place of Sri Bhagavan. The place goes by different names. *Avarta chuzhi* an eddy. There had been several deluges. God Siva had saved this place from three of them. On one occasion when the whole land surface was immersed in the waters, Siva planted His spear in that place. All the waters, which would have otherwise flooded it, were drawn into that hole. Then an eddy was formed. Hence the name. Again in another deluge, He held the place aloft on the top of the spear. Hence, *Soolapuri*.

Mother Earth was carried away by Hiranyaksha into the waters. When recovered by Vishnu she felt that she had *papasparsa* by that Rakshasa. As an expiation of that impure touch she worshipped Siva in that place. Hence, *Bhuminathesvara Kshetra*.

Gautama is prominent in Arunachala as well as in Tiruchuzhi. Shiva showed Himself to the saint in the dancing posture and also re-enacted the wedding of Gauri Sankar.

Kaundinya was another *rishi* for whose sake the sacred river began to flow there. It goes by the name of the *rishi i.e.*, Kaundinya river which in Tamil was corrupted into Kundaru. It is otherwise called Papahari *i.e.*, the destroyer of sins. There lies a story behind it: A King's daughter was hysterical (*i.e.*, possessed). She was taken on a pilgrimage to various sacred places and *tirthas*. On one occasion the party heard the name of Papahari as a *tirtha* in a *sankalpa* before bathing. They enquired where the *tirtha* was and went to Tiruchuzhi. The girl was bathed in that water and thus made free from the spirit.

The Pandya king also got free from *brahmahatya* in this place. It happens to be the centre of the Pandya Kingdom, which comprised the Madura, Ramnad and Tirunelveli Districts.

The village had a sacred tank in front of the temple, which was the spot of the eddy created by the spear of Siva. Even now the waters in the tank rise at the rate of about a foot every day for ten consecutive days preceding the full moon in the Tamil month Masi (*Maghasuddha Pournami*) and then gradually fall during the succeeding ten days. This phenomenon can be observed every year. It is noted with wonder by the young ones of the village. Pilgrims gather to bathe in those waters on that occasion. That water is sulphurous for the silver jewels of the bathers become dark after bathing in it. Sri Bhagavan said he had noted it when He was a boy.

The village has the river on one side and a huge lake on the other side. The bund of the lake is clayey and runs about three miles in all. The lake is strangely enough twenty feet over the level of the village. Even when it is over-full, the waters escape in other directions leaving the village unaffected.

1st April, 1939

Talk 653.

Some teachers who attended the Teachers' Guild meeting in the town came on a visit to the hall. One of them asked Sri Bhagavan: "I seem to be wandering in a forest because I do not find the way."

M.: This idea of being in a forest must go. It is such ideas which are at the root of the trouble.

D.: But I do not find the way.

M.: Where is the forest and where is the way unless they are in you? You are as you are and yet you speak of a forest and ways.

D.: But I am obliged to move in society.

M.: Society is also an idea similar to that of the forest.

D.: I leave my home and go and mix in society.

M.: Who does it?

D.: The body moves and does all.

M.: Quite so. Now that you identify yourself with the body you feel the trouble. The trouble is in your mind. You think that you are the body or that you are the mind. But there are occasions when you

are free from both. For example in deep slumber, you create a body and a world in your dream. That represents your mental activities. In your waking state you think that you are the body and then the idea of forest and the rest arise.

Now, consider the situation. You are an unchanging and continuous being who remains in all these states which are constantly changing and therefore transient. But you are always there. It follows that these fleeting objects are mere phenomena which appear on your being like pictures which move across a screen. The screen does not move when the picture moves. Similarly, you do not move from where you are even when the body leaves the home and mixes in society.

Your body, the society, the forest and the ways are all in you; you are not in them. You are the body also but not this body only. If you remain as your pure Self, the body and its movements need not affect you.

D.: This can be realised only by the Grace of the master. I was reading *Sri Bhagavata*; it says that Bliss can be had only by the dust of the Master's feet. I pray for Grace.

M.: What is Bliss but your own being? You are not apart from Being which is the same as Bliss. You are now thinking that you are the mind or the body which are both changing and transient. But you are unchanging and eternal. That is what you should know.

D.: It is darkness and I am ignorant.

M.: This ignorance must go. Again, who says 'I am ignorant'? He must be the witness of ignorance. That is what you are. Socrates said, "I know that I do not know." Can it be ignorance? It is wisdom.

D.: Why then do I feel unhappy when I am in Vellore and feel peace in Your Presence?

M.: Can this feeling in this place be Bliss? When you leave the place you say you are unhappy. Therefore this peace is not permanent, nay it is mixed with unhappiness which is felt in another place. Therefore you cannot find Bliss in places and in periods of time. It must be permanent in order that it may be useful. Such permanent being is yourself. Be the Self and that is Bliss. You are always That.

You say that you left Vellore, travelled in the train, arrived in Tiruvannamalai, entered the hall and found happiness. When you

go back you are not happy in Vellore. Now, do you really move from place to place? Even considering you to be the body, the body sits in a cart at the gate of the home, the cart moves on to the railway station. Then it gets into a railway carriage which speeds on from Vellore to Tiruvannamalai. There it gets into another cart which brings the body here. Yet when you are asked, you say that you travelled all the way from Vellore. Your body remains where it was and all the places went past it.

Such ideas are due to the false identity which is so deep-rooted.

Another asked: Should we understand the world as transient (*anitya*)?

M.: Why so? Because you are now considering it to be permanent (*nitya*) the Scriptures tell you that it is not so in order to wean you from wrong ideas. This should be done by knowing yourself to be eternal (*nitya*) and not by branding the world as transitory (*anitya*).

D.: We are told to practise indifference (*udasina*) which is possible only if the world is unreal.

M.: Yes. *Oudasinyam abhipsitam.* Indifference is advised. But what is it? It is absence of love and hatred. When you realise the Self on which these phenomena pass, will you love or hate them? That is the meaning of indifference.

D.: That will lead to want of interest in our work. Should we do our duty or not?

M.: Yes - certainly. Even if you try not to do your duty you will be perforce obliged to do it. Let the body complete the task for which it came into being.

Sri Krishna also says in the Gita, whether Arjuna liked it or not he would be forced to fight. When there is work to be done by you, you cannot keep away; nor can you continue to do a thing when you are not required to do it, that is to say, when the work allotted to you has been done. In short, the work will go on and you must take your share in it - the share which is allotted to you.

D.: How is it to be done?

M.: Like an actor playing his part in a drama - free from love or hatred.

OM TAT SAT

Glossary

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Bibliography

GLOSSARY

A

abhasa: reflection
abhichara prayogam: Black magic
abhijna: direct perception
abhimana: attachment
abhisheka: pouring water, etc. over any sacred image
abhyasa: practice
abhyasi: one who practises
achala: unmoving; a hill or a mountain
achamana: sipping water before or after a religious ceremony
achit: not sentient
adhara: support
adhishtana: substratum
adhyaropa: superimposition
adhyasika: superimposed
adyatmika sakti: power of the Self
adhridha: weak, not firm
advaita: non-duality
agami (*agami karma*): actions expected to bear fruit in future births
aham: I
aham Brahmasmi: I am Brahman
ahankara: 'l' sense; the ego-self
ahimsa: non-violence
ajatavada: the theory of *advaita* which denies creation
ajnana: ignorance
ajna: direction; injunction
ajnani: the ignorant, one who has not realized the Self
akara: form or shape
akasa: ether; space
akasavani: voice coming from the sky
akhanda: undivided
akhandakara vritti: unbroken experience
akritopasaka: one who has not done *upasana* or meditation
amrita: immortal
amrita nadi: the name of a yogic nerve
anadi: without beginning
anahata: name of a yogic *chakra*
ananda: bliss
anandamaya kosa: the sheath of bliss
anandatman: Self in the state of bliss
ananta: infinite; endless
anatman: non-Self

anava: limitation
anichcha: involuntary
anitya: transitory
annamaya kosa: sheath of gross matter
antah (*antar*): internal
antah karanam: the inner organ; the mind
antah pranayama: internal breath-regulation
antardhana: disappearance from sight
antarmukhi manas: inward-turned mind
anu: atom
ap: water
apana: the life-force which goes down
apara: the lower
apara vibhuti: inferior *vibhuti*
aparoksha: direct; immediate
apavada: removal
ardra: a star in the constellation of Orion
aruna: red
arupa: formless
asamsakti: non-attachment; one of the seven stages of enlightenment
asana: sitting posture; seat
asat: not real
asesha sakshi: witness of all
asrama: stage of life; a place where hermits and sages live
asthira: unsteady
asukavi: one who can versify spontaneously
asuddha: impure
asura: demon
atiasrama (*atyasrama*): Above the four stages of life
ati jagrat: beyond waking
ati sunya: beyond the void
atita: beyond
ativahika sarira: the subtle body which remains when the physical body perishes and which carries the individual to other worlds
atma (*n*): Self
atma jnani: one who has realized the Self
atma nadi: the name of a yogic nerve
atma nishta: abiding in the Self
atmanusandhana: thinking constantly of the Self
atma vichara: enquiry into the Self
atyanta vairagyam: total dispassion
avarana: covering
avarta: eddy

avastha traya: the three states of consciousness, namely waking, dream and sleep
avatar: incarnation of God
avidya: nescience; ignorance
avritta chakshus: introverted look
ayatana: repository

B

bahir pranayamam: external breath regulation
bahir mukhi manas: outward going mind
bahudaka: a *sannyasin* who wanders about
bahya: external
bala: child
bandha: bondage
bandha hetu: cause of bondage
beeja: seed
bhajana: singing God's praises especially in chorus
bhakta: devotee
bhakti: devotion
bhakti marga: path of devotion
bhashyakara: commentator
bhavana: idea
bhoga: enjoyment
bhoga hetu: cause of enjoyment
bhogyam: that which is enjoyed
bhoga vastu: object of enjoyment
bhokta: enjoyer
bhuma: all-comprehensive; the Absolute
bindu: a term used in *Tantrism*
brahmachari: a celibate; a student
brahmahatya: the sin of killing a *brahmin*
Brahmaivaham: Brahman am l
Brahmajnana: knowledge (realization) of Brahman
Brahmajnani: one who has realized the Self
Brahman: The Supreme Being; the Absolute
Brahmanishta: one who is established in Brahman
brahmacharya: celibacy
brahmakaravritti: concept in the form of Brahman
Brahmavid: one who has realised Brahman
Brahma-vid-vara: one who is a superior among knowers of Brahman
Brahma-vid-varishta: the very best among the knowers of Brahman
Brahma-vid-varya: the best among the Knowers of Brahman
Buddha: one who is aware
buddhi: intellect

C

chaitanya: Consciousness
chakshus: eye
chamara: a fly whisk made of the bushy tail of *Bos grunniens* used as a badge of royalty
chanchala: changing, fickle
chidvyoman (*chitta vyoman*): expanse of consciousness
chinmaya: full of Consciousness
chinta: thought or idea
chintamani: wish-fulfilling gem
chit: Consciousness
chitta: memory; mind
chitta-nirodha: control of mind
chitta suddhi: purity of mind
chitta vilasa: play of mind
chittaikograta: one-pointedness of mind

D

daharakasa: ether of the heart
dana: gift
darsan(*a*): seeing; vision
dasi: courtesan
deha(*m*): body
dehatma buddhi: I-am-the-body consciousness
dehavasana: attachment to the body
devas: celestial beings
dharana: concentration of mind; one of the eight stages of *Raja Yoga*
dharma sastri: one who is well-versed in the scriptures relating to *dharma*
dhriti: steadfastness
dhyana: meditation; contemplation
dikpalas: gods who protect the various quarters
diksha: spiritual instruction
divya chakshus: divine eye
drashta: seer
dridha: firm
drik: he who sees; the subject
drishti: look
drishti srishti: simultaneous creation
drisya: that which is seen; the object
drisyanuviddha: associated with something seen
drisya vilaya: the disappearance of the objective world
dukha: misery; frustration
dvaita: duality
dvandva: pair of opposites
dvividha (*dwividha*): two-fold

E

eka: one
ekagrata: concentration

G

ganja: a narcotic, *hashish*
Gayatri: a well-known Vedic *mantra*
gopuram: temple tower
granthi: knot
grihastha: householder
grihini: housewife
gunas: the three fundamental qualities, tendencies or stresses which underlie all manifestations
gunatita: one who has transcended the *gunas*
guru: a spiritual master; teacher

H

halahala: the poison which came up when the milky ocean was churned
hamsa: a *sannyasi* who has advanced to a high stage
hasta: hand
hatha yoga: a form of yoga involving bodily postures
hetu: cause
Hiranyagarbha: universal consciousness; totality of minds
homa: sacrifice in fire
hridaya: heart; the spiritual centre in the body
hridaya granthi: knot of the heart
hrit: heart
hrit pundarika: the heart lotus

I

ichcha: desire
idam: this
indriyas: senses
ishta devata: the god whom one likes to worship or contemplate
Isvara: God, the Supreme Being in His aspect as the Lord of all creation
Isvara anugraha: God's grace
Isvara aradhana: worship of God
Isvara drishti: Seeing everything as God
lsvara prasada: God's grace

J

jada: inert
jagat: world
jagrat: waking state

jagrat sushupti: wakeful sleep
jai: victory
jala: water
janma: birth
japa: repetition of a sacred word or syllable or a name of God
japa karta: one who does *japa*
jirna: decayed
jiva: the individual soul; the ego
jivanmukta: one who is liberated even when he is alive
jivanmukti: liberation while one is alive
jivatman: the individual self
jnana(*m*): knowledge
jnana bhumikas: stages of knowledge of which there are seven
jnana chakshus: eye of wisdom
jnana drishti: eye of wisdom
jnanagni: fire of wisdom
jnana lakshana: sign of wisdom
jnana marga: the path of knowledge
jnana yoga: the method of realizing the Absolute through knowledge
jnanendriya: organ of knowledge
jnani: the Self-realized sage
jothi (*jyothi*): light; effulgence

K

kaivalya: the state of liberation
kala: a term used in Tantrism
kalpana: idea
kama: desire; lust
kantha: throat
kanthabharana: ornament worn round the neck
kanya: virgin
karana: cause
karana sarira: causal body
karma: action; work; deeds; also result of action
karma samya: good and bad actions in equal proportions
karma traya: the three kinds of karma, namely *sanchita, agami* and *prarabdha*
karma yoga: the spiritual path of action
karmendriya: organ of action
karpura arati: the waving of lighted camphor during *puja*
karta: he who does an act
kartrtva: doership
kartrtva buddhi: the sense of doership
kashaya: latent impurity

kashaya: ochre coloured garment
kasiyatra: pilgrimage to Kasi; part of the marriage rites among Brahmins
kasturi: musk
kayakalpa: a medicinal preparation for prolonging life
kayasiddhi: making the body proof against injury
kevala kumbhaka: sudden stoppage of breathing, whether in the midst of inhaling or exhaling
kevala samadhi: *samadhi* in which activities of body and mind are only merged
khanda: division
Krama mukti: liberation by degrees
krama srishti: gradual creation
kshetra: temple; field; the body
kshipta: active
khyati: theory
kousalam: skill
krida: play, pastime
kritopasaka: one who has done *upasana* or meditation
krodha: anger
kumbha: a pot used for keeping water
kumbhaka: retention of breath
kundalini: yogic power called the serpent power
Kumkuma: vermilion powder applied to the forehead
kutichaka: a *sannyasin* who lives permanently in a hut
kuvasana: bad tendency

L

laghu: light; easy
lakshana: sign
lakshya: aim, target, goal
lakshyartha: implied meaning
laya: dissolution
lila (*leela*): play or sport
linga: symbol
Linga sarira: subtle body
loka: world; that which is seen
loukika: worldly

M

madhya: centre; mixed; middling
madhyama: a stage in uttering sounds
maharshi: great *rishi* (seer or sage)
mahasunya: great void
mahatma: enlightened person
mahavakyas: the four main sentences proclaiming the truth of Brahman, one taken from each Veda

malaparipaka: complete removal of impurity
malina: impure
manana: thinking over what has been heard
mani: jewel
manolaya: (temporary) subsidence of the mind
manomaya kosa: sheath of mind
manonasa: extinction of the mind
manta: thinker
mantra: cosmic sound forms of the Vedas used for worship and prayer; also seed letters for meditation on the form of the Lord; ritual incantation
mantra japa: repetition of a *mantra*
marga: path
maru marichika: mirage seen in a desert
mati: thinking power
maya: illusion; the power inherent in Brahman by which it manifests the world
maya vada: the doctrine of *maya*
medha: intellect
Moda: joy which is higher than priya
moksha: Liberation; spiritual freedom
moodha: dull
moola: root; source
mooladhara: One of the yogic centres of the body
mouna (*mowna*): Silence
mriga trishna: water of mirage
mukta: one who is liberated
mukti: Liberation; spiritual freedom
Mulavidya: primal ignorance
mumukshu: one who aspires for Liberation
mumukshutva: the desire for Liberation
muni: sage
muppazh: three voids

N

na medhaya: not by the intellect
nada: subtle sound accompanied by an effulgence, a term used in Tantrism
nabhi: navel
nadaswaram: the pipe of the South Indian piper
nadi: yogic nerve
naham: I am not
naishtika brahmacharya: lifelong celibacy
nama: name; the name of God
nama japa: repetition of the name of God
nama sankirtan: Singing the names of God
nama smarana: remembering and repeating the name of God

namaskar (*a*): prostration before God or Guru
nana: diversity
naraka: hell
nasa: destruction
nava: new
nididhyasana: the last of the three stages of vedantic realization; uninterrupted contemplation
nijananda: true bliss
nirakara upasana: meditation on the formless
nirguna: without attributes
nirguna upasana: meditation on the attributeless Brahman
nirodha: control
nirvana: Liberation
nirvikalpa samadhi: the highest state of concentration in which the soul loses all sense of being different from the universal Self, but a temporary state from which there is a return to ego-consciousness
nishkama karma: acts done without a motive
nitya: always; eternal
nitya siddha: ever present
nivritti: destruction
nivritti marga: The path of renunciation
niyama: law, rule

O

owpacharika: in a worldly sense

P

padarthabhavini: absolute non-perception of objects; one of the seven stages of enlightenment
panchakshari: a *mantra* of five syllables sacred to Siva
panchikarana: division of the five elements and combining the parts in particular proportions
para: higher; in Tantrism unmanifest sound
param: transcendental
paramahamsa: a *sannyasin* who has attained Self-realization
paramarthika: absolute
paramarthika satyam: absolute reality
paramatma (*n*): the Supreme Self
paranchi khani: outgoing
para nadi: the name of a yogic nerve
para vibhuti: superior *vibhuti*
pareccha: by another's will
parinama vada: the theory of Brahman changing into the world
paroksha: hearsay or indirect

Pasyanti: a stage in uttering sound
phala: fruit; the result of an act
phala chaitanyam: knowledge
phala data: dispenser of the results of our acts
phala sruti: description of the result of an act
Pisachas: demons
poorna: full
pradakshina: going round a sacred person or place
pradeepta: Shining brightly
prajna: the individual being in sleep
prajnana: full consciousness
prajnana ghana: full consciousness
prakriti: nature, *Maya*
pralaya: dissolution (of the world)
pramana: means of valid knowledge
pramata (*r*): knower; cogniser
pramoda: joy which is higher than *moda*
prana: vital air; life-force; breath; the air which goes up
pranamaya kosa: sheath of *prana* or the vital air
pranasakti: the power of the vital forces
pranava: another term for OM
pranayama: regulation of breathing
prapatti: surrender
prapti: attainment
prarabdha: that part of one's karma which is to be worked out in this life
prasad (*a*): grace; food etc., which has been offered to God and afterwards distributed among the devotees
prasthana traya: the threefold scripture
pratibhasika satya: illusory reality as it appears to a particular individual
pratikam: symbol
pratikriya: remedy
pratyabhijna: recognition
pratyahara: one of the steps in Raja Yoga; withdrawal
pratyaksha: direct; immediate
pravritti marga: path of action
prayaschitta: a rite for expiating sin
prayatna: effort
prema: love
prithvi (*prthvi*): earth
priya: joy; dear
puja: ceremonial worship with flowers, water etc.
punya: merit
puraka: inhalation
purana: old; an ancient book of stories embodying religious symbolism

puri: city
puriashtaka: subtle body consisting of eight phases
purna: full
purusha: man; applied sometimes to God
purushakara: personal effort
purva paksha: arguments advanced by the opponent
purva samskara: latent tendency

R

Raja Yoga: the principal system of Yoga as taught by Patanjali
rajas: one of the three primal qualities, described as red, the principle of activity
rajju-sarpa: rope-snake; a rope looking like a snake in a dim light
rasa: bliss
rasasvada: taste of bliss in the absence of thoughts
ravi marga: path of the sun
rechaka: exhalation
rishi (*rshi*): a seer; a sage

S

sabdanuviddha: associated with sound
sad guru: true guru
sadhak (*a*): a spiritual aspirant; one who follows a method of spiritual discipline
sadhana: method of spiritual practice
sadhana-chatushtaya: the four qualifications expected in an aspirant
sadhu: ascetic; sage
sadhu seva: service rendered to sages
sadyomukti: immediate Liberation
saguna: with attributes
saguna upasana: meditation on Brahman with attributes
sahaja: natural; one's natural state
sahaja samadhi: *samadhi* which comes naturally and is present always
sahasrara: the highest yogic centre located in the brain
sajatiya: of the same kind
sakshatkaram: direct realization
sakshi: witness; the Self
sakti: power
sakti pata: descent of divine power on a person
sama: equal; common
samanya: common; general; ordinary
samashti: whole
samatva: equality
samjnana: awareness; perception

samrajya: empire
samsara: the cycle of births and deaths
samskara: innate tendency
samvit: consciousness; knowledge
samyamana: one-pointedness of mind
sanchita (*sanchita karma*): accumulated karma of former births
sandeha: doubt
sanga: association
sankalpa: intention, thought; the ostensible motive of doing a ritual uttered before it is begun
sannidhi: presence
sannyasi: an ascetic, one who belongs to the fourth stage of life
santi: peace
sarira: body
sariri: dweller in the body
sarira traya: the three bodies namely the physical, subtle and causal
sarva: all
sarvajna: omniscient
sarvajnatvam: omniscience
sastra: scripture; science
sat: good; existence
satya: true; the real
satyam: truth; reality
sat-chit-ananda: being consciousness-bliss
sat sanga: association with the wise
sattva: purity; one of the three primal qualities described as white, the principle of purity and goodness
sattvapatti: realization; one of the seven stages of enlightenment
sattvik: pure; relating to *sattva*, one of the three constituents of *prakriti*
savikalpa samadhi: a state of concentration in which the distinction between the knower. knowledge and known is not yet lost
shadadhara: the six yogic centres
siddha: one who has acquired supernatural powers and is capable of working miracles; also a state of accomplishment
siddhi: supernatural powers; realization; attainment
sishya: disciple
Sivoham: I am Siva
sloka: a stanza in Sanskrit
smriti: memory; scriptures based on the Vedas
soham: I am He (Brahman)
sparsa: touch
sphurana: manifestation
sraddha: faith
sravana: hearing of the truth from the guru

srishti drishti: gradual creation
srota: hearer
srotra: ear
sruti: scripture
sthitaprajna: one who is established in wisdom
sthula: physical
sthula sarira: physical body
sthiti: being
stotram: a hymn of praise
subhechcha: desire for enlightenment; one of the seven stages of enlightenment
suddha: pure
sukha: happiness
sukha asana: easy and comfortable posture of sitting
sukshma: subtle
sukshma sarira: the subtle body
sunya: blank; void
sushumna: the name of a yogic nerve
sushupti: dreamless sleep
sutra: string; aphorism
suvasana: good tendency
svagata: within itself
svapna: dream
svarga: heaven
svaroopa (*swarupa*): nature; real form
swaraj: independence
swatantra: independence
swechcha: of one's own will

T

taijasa: the individual being in dream
tamas: darkness; ignorance; one of the three primal qualities described as black; the principle of inertia
tanha: thirst (for living)
tanmatras: elements in their subtle forms
tanmaya: full of the Self
tanumanasa: tenuous mind; one of the seven stages of enlightenment
tapas (*tapasya*): austerity
tapobhrashta: one who has fallen away from his austerities
tapta-aya-pindavat: like a red hot iron ball
tattva: truth, essence of a thing
tejas: effulgence
tejomaya: full of light
tejo rupa: of the form of light

tirtha: a sacred river or tank
triputi: triad like seer, seen and seeing
turavu (Tamil): renunciation
turya (*turiya*): the fourth state beyond waking, dreaming and sleeping
turyaga: beyond words; one of the seven stages of enlightenment
tyaga: giving up

U

udasinam: indifference
upadesa: spiritual instruction
upadhi: limiting adjunct
upasaka: one who meditates
upasana: meditation
upasana sthana: seat of meditation

V

vachyartha: literal meaning
vada: theory; disputation
vaikhari: one of the stages in the formation of sound; audible sound
Vaikuntha: the abode of Vishnu
vairagya: dispassion; non-attachment
Vaishnavite: a worshipper of Vishnu
varnasrama dharma: *dharma* of the various castes and stages of life
vasana: habit of the mind; latent tendency or impression
vasana kshaya: cessation of *vasanas*
vastutah: in reality
vayu: air
vibhakti: separation
vibhuti: sacred ashes; God's glory; supernatural power
vichara: enquiry
vichara marga: the spiritual path of enquiry
vicharana: investigation; one of the seven stages of enlightenment
videha mukta: one who is liberated after death
videha mukti: liberation after death
vidya: knowledge; learning
vijatiya: of a different kind
vijnana: special knowledge; spiritual knowledge
vijnanamaya kosa: sheath of intellect
vijnanatma: the ignorant Self
vijnata: knower
vikshepa: diversity
vikshipta: distracted
viparita: contrary
Virat: totality of gross beings

visesha: particular; special
vishaya: object
visishta: qualified
visishtadvaitin: one who believes in a modified form of non-duality
visranti: repose
Visva: the individual being in the waking state
visvarupa (*darsana*): God seen as the universe
vivechana: discrimination
viyoga: separation
vritti: modification of the mind
vyaptam: pervaded
vyashti: part
vyavahara (*vyavaharika*): empirical
vyavahara satya: phenomenal existence

Y

yaga: ritualistic sacrifice
yajna: sacrifice
yoga: union (with the Supreme Being)
yogabhrashta: one who has slipped from the yoga
yogarudha: one who has attained yoga
Yogiraja: king of yogis
yugapat srishti: simultaneous creation

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The Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi in His Own Words

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PREFACE

During the half century and more of his life at Tiruvannamalai, Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi was visited by a constant stream of people from all parts of India, and by many from the West, seeking spiritual guidance, or consolation in grief, or simply the experience of his presence. He wrote very little all these years, but a number of records of his talks with visitors were kept and subsequently published by his Ashram. These are mostly in diary form, with little arrangement according to subject. The purpose of the present book is to build up a general exposition of the Maharshi's teachings by selecting and fitting together passages from these dialogues and from his writings (published as *The Collected Works of Sri Ramana Maharshi*, by Messrs. Rider & Co., in England and by Sri Ramanasramam in India). The editor's comments have been kept to a minimum and are printed in smaller type to distinguish them clearly from the Maharshi's own words.

No distinction is made between the periods at which the Maharshi made any statement, and none is needed, for he was not a philosopher working out a system but a Realised Man speaking from direct knowledge. It sometimes happens that one who is on a spiritual path, or even who has not yet begun consciously seeking, has a glimpse of Realisation during which, for a brief eternity, he experiences absolute certainty of his divine, immutable, universal Self. Such an experience came to the Maharshi when he was a lad of sixteen. He himself has described it:

> It was about six weeks before I left Madurai for good that the great change in my life took place. It was quite sudden. I was

sitting alone in a room on the first floor of my uncle's house. I seldom had any sickness, and on that day there was nothing wrong with my health, but a sudden violent fear of death overtook me. There was nothing in my state of health to account for it, and I did not try to account for it or to find out whether there was any reason for the fear. I just felt 'I am going to die' and began thinking what to do about it. It did not occur to me to consult a doctor, or my elders or friends; I felt that I had to solve the problem myself, there and then.

The shock of the fear of death drove my mind inwards and I said to myself mentally, without actually framing the words: 'Now death has come; what does it mean? What is it that is dying? The body dies.' And I at once dramatised the occurrence of death. I lay with my limbs stretched out stiff as though *rigor mortis* had set in, and imitated a corpse so as to give greater reality to the enquiry. I held my breath and kept my lips tightly closed so that no sound could escape, so that neither the word 'I' nor any other word could be uttered. 'Well then,' I said to myself, 'this body is dead. It will be carried stiff to the burning ground and there burnt and reduced to ashes. But with the death of this body am I dead? Is the body I? It is silent and inert but I feel the full force of my personality and even the voice of the "I" within me, apart from it. So I am Spirit transcending the body. The body dies but the Spirit that transcends it cannot be touched by death. That means I am the deathless Spirit.' All this was not dull thought; it flashed through me vividly as living truth which I perceived directly, almost without thought-process. 'I' was something very real, the only real thing about my present state, and all the conscious activity connected with my body was centred on that 'I'. From that moment onwards the 'I' or Self, focused attention on Itself by a powerful fascination. Fear of death had vanished once and for all. Absorption in the Self continued unbroken from that time on.[1]

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[1] R. M., pp. 8-10.

It is the last sentence that is the most remarkable, because usually such an experience soon passes, although the impression of certainty that it leaves on the mind is never afterwards forgotten. Very rare are the cases when it remains permanent, leaving a man thenceforth in constant identity with the Universal Self. Such a one was the Maharshi.

Soon after this change occurred, the youth who was later to be known as 'the Maharshi' left home as a *sadhu*. He made his way to Tiruvannamalai, the town at the foot of the holy hill of Arunachala, and remained there for the rest of his life.

For a while he sat immersed in Divine Bliss, not speaking, scarcely eating, utterly neglecting the body he no longer needed. Gradually, however, devotees gathered around him and, for their sake, he returned to an outwardly normal life. Many of them, craving instruction, brought him books to read and expound, and he thus became learned almost by accident, neither seeking nor valuing learning. The ancient teaching of non-duality that he thus acquired merely formalised what he had already realised. He has explained this himself:

> I had read no books except the *Periapuranam*, *The Bible* and bits of Thayumanavar or *Thevaram*. My conception of Ishwara was similar to that found in the *Puranas*; I had never heard of Brahman, *samsara* and so forth. I did not yet know that there was an essence or impersonal Real underlying everything, and that Ishwara and I were both identical with It. Later at Tiruvannamalai, as I listened to the *Ribhu Gita* and other sacred books, I learned all this and found that the books were analysing and naming what I had felt intuitively without analysis or name.[1]

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[1] R. M., p. 16.

Perhaps something should be said about the Maharshi's way of answering questions. There was nothing heavy or pontifical about it. He spoke freely and his replies were often given with laughter and humour. If the questioner was not satisfied, he was free to object or ask further questions. It has been said that the Maharshi taught in silence, but this does not mean that he gave no verbal expositions, only that these were not the essential teaching. That was experienced as a silent influence in the Heart. The power of his presence was overwhelming and his beauty indescribable, and yet, at the same time, he was utterly simple, utterly natural, unassuming, unpretentious, unaffected.

For the sake of uniformity, the questioner has been referred to in the dialogues in this book as '*D*', standing for devotee, except in cases where the name is given or where for some reason, the word 'devotee' would not apply. The Maharshi has been referred to as '*B*', standing for Bhagavan, since it was usual to address him by this name and in the third person. Actually, it is a word commonly used to mean 'God' but it is used also in those rare cases where a man is felt to be, as Christ put it, 'One with the Father'. It is the same as the name for the Buddha, commonly translated into English as the 'Blessed One'.

So far as is possible, Sanskrit words have been avoided, and it usually has been possible. The purpose of this is to make the book easier to read, and also to avoid giving the false impression that the quest of Self-Realisation is some intricate science, which can be understood only with a knowledge of Sanskrit terminology. It is true that there are spiritual sciences which have a necessary technical terminology, but they are more indirect. The clear and simple truth of non-duality which Bhagavan taught, and the direct path of Self-enquiry which he

enjoined, can be expounded in simple language; and indeed, he himself expounded them so to Western visitors, without having recourse to Sanskrit terminology. In the rare cases where a Sanskrit term has seemed necessary or useful in this book, its approximate meaning has been indicated in brackets, so that no glossary is necessary. It may also be remarked that the English words – Enlightenment, Liberation, and Self-Realisation have all been used with the same meaning, to correspond with the Sanskrit words *Jnana, Moksha* and *Mukti*.

In places where the English of the source quoted seemed infelicitous, it has been altered. This implies no infidelity to the texts since the replies were mostly given in Tamil or other South Indian languages, and later rendered into English. The meaning has not been changed.

ARTHUR OSBORNE

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

T.	:	*Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*
D.D.	:	*Day by Day with Bhagavan* by A. Devaraja Mudaliar (5th Edition, 2002)
M.G.	:	*Maharshi's Gospel* (12th Edition, 2000)
S.D.B.	:	*Sat Darshana Bhashya*
R.M.	:	*Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-knowledge* by Arthur Osborne (2nd Edition, 2002)
W.	:	*Who am I?*
S.E.	:	*Self-Enquiry*
S.I.	:	*Spiritual Instruction*
E.I.	:	*Essence of Instruction*
F.V.	:	*Forty Verses*
F.V.S.	:	*Supplementary Forty Verses*

Reference numbers refer to page numbers except with *Essence of Instruction, Forty Verses,* and *Supplement,* in which they refer to the number of the verses, and *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, in which they refer to the serial number of the Talks.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE BASIC THEORY

Readers of a philosophical turn of mind may find it strange to see the first chapter of this work entitled "The Basic Theory". It may appear to them that the whole work should be devoted to theory. In fact, however, the Maharshi, like every spiritual master, was concerned rather with the practical work of training aspirants than with expounding theory. The theory had importance, but only as a basis for practice.

D.: Buddha is said to have ignored questions about God.

B.: Yes, and because of this he has been called an agnostic. In fact Buddha was concerned with guiding the seeker to realise Bliss here and now, rather than with academic discussions about God and so forth.[1]

D.: Is the study of science, psychology, physiology, etc., helpful for attaining Yoga-liberation or for intuitive understanding of the unity of Reality?

B.: Very little. Some theoretical knowledge is needed for Yoga and may be found in books, but practical application is what is needed. Personal example and instruction are the most helpful aids. As for intuitive understanding, a person may laboriously convince himself of the truth to be grasped by intuition, of its function and nature, but the actual intuition is more like feeling and requires practical and personal contact. Mere book learning is not of any great

[1] M. G., p. 42.

use. After Realisation all intellectual loads are useless burdens and are to be thrown overboard.[1]

> Pre-occupation with theory, doctrine and philosophy can actually be harmful, insofar as it distracts a man from the really important work of spiritual effort, by offering an easier alternative which is merely mental, and which therefore cannot change his nature.

What use is the learning of those who do not seek to wipe out the letters of destiny (from their brow) by enquiring: 'Whence is the birth of us who know the letters?' They have sunk to the level of a gramophone. What else are they, O Arunachala?

It is those who are not learned that are saved rather than those whose ego has not yet subsided in spite of their learning. The unlearned are saved from the relentless grip of the devil of self-infatuation; they are saved from the malady of a myriad whirling thoughts and words; they are saved from running after wealth. It is from more than one evil that they are saved.[2]

> Similarly he had no use for theoretical discussions.

It is due to illusion born of ignorance that men fail to recognise that which is always and for everybody the inherent Reality dwelling in its natural heart-centre and to abide in it, and that instead they argue that it exists or does not exist, that it has form or has not form, or is non-dual or is dual.[3]

Can anything appear apart from that which is eternal and perfect? This kind of dispute is endless. Do not engage in it.

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[1] T., 28.
[2] F. V. S., 35, 36
[3] F. V., 34.

Instead turn your mind inward and put an end to all this. There is no finality in disputations.[1]

Ultimately, even the scriptures are useless.

The scriptures serve to indicate the existence of the Higher Power or Self and to point the way to It. That is their essential purpose. Apart from that they are useless. However, they are voluminous, in order to be adapted to the level of development of every seeker. As a man rises in the scale he finds the stages already attained to be only stepping stones to higher stages, until finally the goal is reached. When that happens, the goal alone remains and everything else, including the scriptures, become useless.[2]

Sometimes, it is true, he expounded philosophy in all its intricacies, but only as a concession to weakness, to those addicted to much thinking', as he put it in Self-Enquiry. I had thought of quoting such an explanation here, but found that it contained the passage:

The intricate maze of philosophy of the various schools is said to clarify matters and to reveal the Truth, but in fact it creates confusion where none need exist. To understand anything there must be the Self. The Self is obvious, so why not remain as the Self? What need to explain the non-self?

And of himself he adds:

I was indeed fortunate that I never took to it (i.e. philosophy). Had I taken to it I would probably be nowhere; but my inherent tendencies led me directly to inquire 'Who am I?' How fortunate![3]

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[1] T., 132.
[2] T., 63.
[3] T., 392.

THE WORLD – REAL OR ILLUSION?

> Nevertheless, some theoretical teaching is necessary as the basis for the practical work of spiritual training. With the Maharshi this took the form of non-duality, in complete accordance with the teachings of the great Sage, Shankara. The agreement does not, however, mean that Bhagavan was, as a philosopher would put it, 'influenced by' Shankara, merely that the recognised Shankara's teaching as a true exposition of what he had realised and knew by direct knowledge.

D.: Is Bhagavan's teaching the same as Shankara's?

B.: Bhagavan's teaching is an expression of his own experience and realisation. Others find that it tallies with Sri Shankara's.[1]

D.: When the Upanishads say that all is Brahman, how can we agree with Shankara that this world is illusory?

B.: Shankara also said that this world is Brahman or the Self. What he objected to is one's imagining that the Self is limited by the names and forms that constitute the world. He only said that the world has no reality apart from Brahman. Brahman or the Self is like a cinema screen and the world like the pictures on it. You can see the picture only so long as there is a screen. But when the observer himself becomes the screen only the Self remains.[2]

Shankara has been criticised for his philosophy of Maya (illusion) without understanding his meaning. He made three statements: that Brahman is real, that the universe is unreal, and that Brahman is the Universe. He did not stop with the second. The third statement explains the first two; it signifies

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[1] T., 189.
[2] D. D., p. 238.

that when the Universe is perceived apart from Brahman, that perception is false and illusory. What it amounts to is that phenomena are real when experienced as the Self and illusory when seen apart from the Self.[1]

The Self alone exists and is real. The world, the individual and God are, like the illusory appearance of silver in the mother-of-pearl, imaginary creations in the Self.[2] They appear and disappear simultaneously. Actually, the Self alone is the world, the 'I' and God. All that exists is only a manifestation of the Supreme.[3]

D.: What is reality?

B.: Reality must always be real. It has no names or forms but is what underlies them. It underlies all limitations, being itself limitless. It is not bound in any way. It underlies unrealities, being itself Real. It is that which is. It is as it is. It transcends speech and is beyond description such as being or non-being.[4]

> He would not be entangled in apparent disagreements due merely to a different viewpoint or mode of expression.

D.: The Buddhists deny the world whereas Hindu philosophy admits its existence but calls it unreal, isn't that so?

B.: It is only a difference of point of view.

D.: They say that the world is created by Divine Energy (Shakti). Is the knowledge of unreality due to the veiling by illusion (Maya)?

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[1] R. M., p. 92.

[2] As will appear later, this does not in fact imply 'atheism' any more than the previous quotation implies 'pantheism'. In fact, labels are not much use in trying to understand what is not a system of philosophy but a theoretical basis for spiritual effort.

[3] W., § 16.

[4] T., 140.

B.: All admit creation by the Divine Energy, but what is the nature of this energy? It must be in conformity with the nature of its creation.

D.: Are there degrees of illusion?

B.: Illusion itself is illusory. It must be seen by somebody outside it, but how can such a seer be subject to it? So, how can he speak of degrees of it?

You see various scenes passing on a cinema screen: fire seems to burn buildings to ashes; water seems to wreck ships; but the screen on which the pictures are projected remains unburnt and dry. Why? Because the pictures are unreal and the screen real.

Similarly, reflections pass through a mirror but it is not affected at all by their number or quality.

In the same way, the world is a phenomenon upon the substratum of the single Reality which is not affected by it in any way. Reality is only One.

Talk of illusion is due only to the point of view. Change your viewpoint to that of Knowledge and you will perceive the Universe to be only Brahman. Being now immersed in the world, you see it as a real world; get beyond it and it will disappear and Reality alone will remain.[1]

As the last excerpt shows, the postulate of one universal Reality calls for the conception of a process either of illusion or creation to explain the apparent reality of the world.

The world is perceived as an apparent objective reality when the mind is externalised, thereby abandoning its identity with the Self. When the world is thus perceived the true nature

[1] T., 446.

of the Self is not revealed; conversely, when the Self is realised the world ceases to appear as an objective reality.[1]

That is illusion which makes one take what is ever present and all pervasive, full to perfection and self-luminous and is indeed the Self and the core of one's Being, for non-existent and unreal. Conversely, that is illusion which makes one take for real and self-existent what is non-existent and unreal, namely the trilogy of world, ego and God.[2]

> The world is indeed real, but not as an independent, self-subsistent reality, just as a man you see in a dream is real as a dream-figure but not as a man.

To those who have not realised the Self as well as to those who have, the world is real. But to the former, Truth is adapted to the form of the world whereas to the latter Truth shines as the formless Perfection and the Substratum of the world. This is the only difference between them.[3]

As I recalled Bhagavan saying sometimes that unreal (*mithya*, imaginary) and real (*satyam*) mean the same, but did not quite understand, I asked him about it. He said, 'Yes, I do sometimes say that. What do you mean by real? What is it that you call real?'

I answered: "According to Vedanta, only that which is permanent and unchanging can be called real. That is the meaning of Reality."

Then Bhagavan said: "The names and forms which constitute the world continually change and perish and are therefore called unreal. It is unreal (imaginary) to limit the Self

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[1] W., § 8.
[2] S. I., Chap. II, § 5.
[3] F. V., 18.

to these names and forms and real to regard all as the Self. The non-dualist says that the world is unreal, but he also says, 'All this is Brahman'. So it is clear that what he condemns is, regarding the world as objectively real in itself, not regarding it as Brahman. He who sees the Self sees the Self alone in the world also. It is immaterial to the Enlightened whether the world appears or not. In either case, his attention is turned to the Self. It is like the letters and the paper on which they are printed. You are so engrossed in the letters that you forget about the paper, but the Enlightened sees the paper as the substratum whether the letters appear on it or not.[1]

This is still more succinctly stated as follows:

The Vedantins do not say that the world is unreal. That is a misunderstanding. If they did, what would be the meaning of the Vedantic text: 'All this is Brahman'? They only mean that the world is unreal as world but real as Self. If you regard the world as non-self, it is not real. Everything, whether you call it illusion (Maya) or Divine Play (*Lila*) or Energy (*Shakti*) must be within the Self and not apart from it.[2]

Before leaving the theory of the world as a manifestation of the Self, devoid of objective reality, it must be stressed once again that theory had importance for the Maharshi only insofar as it helped a man's spiritual development, not for its own sake. Cosmology as understood in modern physical science simply did not concern him.

D.: The Vedas contain conflicting accounts of cosmogony. Ether is said to be the first creation in one place, vital energy in another, water in another, something else in

[1] D. D., pp. 307-8.
[2] D. D., p. 269.

another; how can all this be reconciled? Does it not impair the credibility of the Vedas?

B.: Different seers saw different aspects of truth at different times, each emphasising some viewpoint. Why do you worry about their conflicting statements? The essential aim of the Vedas is to teach us the nature of the imperishable Self and show us that we are That.

D.: About that part I am satisfied.

B.: Then treat all the rest as auxiliary arguments or as expositions for the ignorant who want to know the origin of things.[1]

Major Chadwick was copying out the English translation of the Tamil *Kaivalya Navaneetha*, when he came across some of the technical terms in it which he had difficulty in understanding. He accordingly asked Bhagavan about them, and Bhagavan replied. "These portions deal with theories of creation. They are not essential because the real purpose of the scriptures is not to set forth such theories. They mention the theories casually, so that those readers who wish to, may take interest in them. The truth is that the world appears as a passing shadow in a flood of light. Light is necessary even to see the shadow. The shadow is not worth any special study, analysis or discussion. The purpose of the book is to deal with the Self and what is said about creation may be omitted for the present."

Later, Sri Bhagavan continued: "Vedanta says that the cosmos springs into view simultaneously with him who sees it and there is no detailed process of creation. It is similar to a dream where he who experiences the dream arises simultaneously with the dream he experiences. However, some people cling so

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[1] T., 30.

fast to objective knowledge that they are not satisfied when told this. They want to know how sudden creation can be possible and argue that an effect must be preceded by a cause. In fact they desire an explanation of the world that they see about them. Therefore the scriptures try to satisfy their curiosity by such theories. This method of dealing with the subject is called the theory of gradual creation, but the true spiritual seeker can be satisfied with instantaneous creation."[1]

THE NATURE OF MAN

> We come now to the very essence of theory, the nature of man himself. For whatever a man may think of the reality of the world or of God he knows that he himself exists. And it is in order to understand and at the same time to perfect himself that he studies and seeks guidance.

The individual being which identifies its existence with that of the life in the physical body as 'I' is called the ego. The Self, which is pure Consciousness, has no ego-sense about it. Neither can the physical body, which is inert in itself, have this ego-sense. Between the two, that is between the Self or pure Consciousness and the inert physical body, there arises mysteriously the ego-sense or 'I' notion, the hybrid which is neither of them, and this flourishes as an individual being. This ego or individual being is at the root of all that is futile and undesirable in life. Therefore it is to be destroyed by any possible means; then That which ever is alone remains resplendent. This is Liberation or Enlightenment or Self-Realisation.[2]

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[1] T., 651.
[2] S. I., Chap. 1, § 12.

D.: Bhagavan often says: 'The world is not outside you', or 'everything depends on you', or 'what is there outside you?' I find all this puzzling. The world existed before I was born and will continue to exist after my death, as it has survived the death of so many who once lived as I do now.

B.: Did I ever say that the world exists because of you? I have only put to you the question 'what exists apart from yourself?' You ought to understand that by the Self neither the physical body nor the subtle body is meant.

What you are told is that if you once know the Self within which all ideas exist, not excluding the idea of yourself, of others like you and of the world, you can realise the truth that there is a Reality, a Supreme Truth which is the Self of all the world you now see, the Self of all the selves, the one Real, the Supreme, the eternal Self, as distinct from the ego or individual being, which is impermanent. You must not mistake the ego or the bodily idea for the Self.

D.: Then Bhagavan means that the Self is God?

> And in his next reply Bhagavan, as was his way, turned the discussion from theory to practice. Although the present chapter is, on the whole, devoted to theory, it seems appropriate to continue the dialogue so as to show how the theory was put to practical use.

B.: You see the difficulty. Self-enquiry, 'Who am I?' is a different technique from the meditation – 'I am Siva', or 'I am He'. I rather emphasise Self-Knowledge, for you are first concerned with yourself before you proceed to know the world or its Lord. The 'I am He' or 'I am Brahman', meditation is more or less mental, but the quest for the Self of which I speak is a direct method and is superior to it. For, the moment you get into the quest for the Self and begin to go deeper, the

real Self is waiting there to receive you and then whatever is to be done is done by something else and you, as an individual, have no hand in it. In this process all doubts and discussions are automatically given up, just as one who sleeps forgets all his cares for the time being.

The further discussion illustrates the freedom of argument that Bhagavan allowed to those who were not convinced by a reply.

D.: What certainty is there that something awaits there to receive me?

B.: When a person is sufficiently mature he becomes convinced naturally.

D.: How is this maturity to be attained?

B.: Various ways are prescribed. But whatever previous development there may be, earnest Self-enquiry hastens it.

D.: That is arguing in a circle. I am strong enough for the quest if I am mature and it is the quest that makes me mature.

This is an objection that was often raised in one form or another and the reply to it again emphasises that it is not theory that is needed, but practice.

B.: The mind does have this sort of difficulty. It wants a fixed theory to satisfy itself with. Really, however, no theory is necessary for the man who seriously strives to approach God or his true Self.[1]

Everyone is the Self and indeed, is infinite. Yet each person mistakes his body for his Self. In order to know anything, illumination is necessary. This can only be of the nature of Light; however, it lights up both physical light and physical darkness. That is to say, that it lies beyond apparent light and darkness. It is itself neither, but it is said to be light because it illumines

[1] S. D. B., viii, ix.

both. It is infinite and is Consciousness. Consciousness is the Self of which everyone is aware. No one is ever away from the Self and therefore everyone is in fact Self-realised; only – and this is the great mystery – people do not know this and want to realise the Self. Realisation consists only in getting rid of the false idea that one is not realised. It is not anything new to be acquired. It must already exist or it would not be eternal and only what is eternal is worth striving for.

Once the false notion 'I am the body' or 'I am not realised' has been removed, Supreme Consciousness or the Self alone remains and in people's present state of knowledge they call this 'Realisation.' But the truth is that Realisation is eternal and already exists, here and now.[1]

Consciousness is pure knowledge. The mind arises out of it and is made up of thoughts.[2]

The essence of the mind is only awareness or consciousness. However, when the ego overclouds it, it functions as reasoning, thinking or perceiving. The universal mind, not being limited by the ego, has nothing outside itself and is therefore only aware. This is what the Bible means by 'I am that I am.'[3]

The ego-ridden mind has its strength sapped and is too weak to resist distressing thoughts. The egoless mind is happy, as we see in deep, dreamless sleep. Clearly, therefore, happiness and distress are only modes of the mind.[4]

D.: When I seek the 'I', I see nothing.

B.: You say that because you are accustomed to identify yourself with the body and sight with the eyes, but what is there

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[1] T., 482.
[2] T., 589.
[3] Exodus III, 14.
[4] T., 188.

to be seen? And by whom? And how? There is only one Consciousness and this, when it identifies itself with the body, projects itself through the eyes and sees the surrounding objects. The individual is limited to the waking state; he expects to see something different and accepts the authority of his senses. He will not admit that he who sees, the objects seen, and the act of seeing are all manifestations of the same Consciousness – the 'I-I'. Meditation helps to overcome the illusion that the Self is something to see. Actually there is nothing to see. How do you recognise yourself now? Do you have to hold a mirror up in front of your self to recognise yourself? The awareness is itself the 'I'. Realise it and that is the truth.

D.: When I enquire into the origin of thoughts, there is the perception of the 'I' but it does not satisfy me.

B.: Quite right. Because this perception of 'I' is associated with a form, perhaps with the physical body. Nothing should be associated with the pure Self. The Self is the pure Reality in whose light the body, the ego and all else shine. When all thoughts are stilled, pure Consciousness remains over.[1]

D.: How did the ego arise?

> Here is a question that gives rise to endless philosophising, but Bhagavan, holding rigorously to the truth of non-duality, refused to admit its existence.

B.: There is no ego. If there were, you would have to admit of two selves in you. Therefore there is no ignorance. If you enquire into the Self, ignorance, which is already non-existent, will be found not to exist and you will say that it has fled.[2]

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[1] T., 196.
[2] T., 363.

Sometimes it seemed to the listener that absence of thought must mean a mere blank, and therefore Bhagavan specifically guarded against this.

Absence of thought does not mean a blank. There must be someone to be aware of that blank. Knowledge and ignorance pertain only to the mind and are in duality, but the Self is beyond them both. It is pure Light. There is no need for one Self to see another. There are no two selves. What is not the Self is mere non-self and cannot see the Self. The Self has no sight or hearing; it lies beyond them, all alone, as pure Consciousness.[1]

Bhagavan often cited man's continued existence during deep, dreamless sleep as a proof that he exists independent of the ego and the body-sense. He also referred to the state of deep sleep as a body-free and ego-free state.

D.: I don't know whether the Self is different from the ego.

B.: In what state were you in deep sleep?

D.: I don't know.

B.: Who doesn't know? The waking self? But you don't deny that you existed while in deep sleep?

D.: I was and am, but I don't know who was in deep sleep.

B.: Exactly. The waking man says that he did not know anything in the state of deep sleep. Now he sees objects and knows that he exists but in deep sleep there were no objects and no spectator. And yet the same person who is speaking now existed in deep sleep also. What is the difference between the two states? There are objects and the play of the senses now, while in deep sleep there were not. A new entity, the ego, has arisen. It acts through the senses, sees objects, confuses itself with the body and claims to be the Self. In

[1] T., 245.

reality, what was in deep sleep continues to be now also. The Self is changeless. It is the ego which has come between. That which rises and sets is the ego. That which remains changeless is the Self.[1]

> Such examples sometimes gave rise to the mistaken idea that the state of Realisation or abidance in the Self which Bhagavan prescribed was a state of nescience like physical sleep and therefore he guarded against this idea also.

B.: Waking, dream and sleep are mere phases of the mind, not of the Self. The Self is the witness of these three states. Your true nature exists in sleep.

D.: But we are advised not to fall asleep during meditation.

B.: It is stupor which you must guard against. That sleep which alternates with waking is not the true sleep. That waking which alternates with sleep is not the true waking. Are you awake now? No. What you have to do is to wake up to your true state. You should neither fall into false sleep nor remain falsely awake.[2]

B.: Though present even in sleep, the Self is not then perceived. It cannot be known in sleep straightaway. It must first be realised in the waking state for it is our true nature underlying all the three states. Effort must be made in the waking state and the Self realised here and now. It will then be understood to be the continuous Self uninterrupted by the alteration of waking, dream and deep sleep.[3]

> In fact, one name for the true state of realised being is the 'Fourth State' existing eternally beyond the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep. It is compared with the state of deep sleep since, like this, it is formless and non-dual; however, as the above quotation shows, it is far from being the same. In the Fourth State the ego merges in Consciousness, as in sleep it does in unconsciousness.

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[1] T., 143.
[2] T., 495.
[3] T., 307.

DEATH AND RE-BIRTH

In nothing did Bhagavan show more clearly that theory has to be adapted to the understanding of the seeker than in the question of death and re-birth. For those who were capable of grasping pure, non-dual theory, he explained merely that the question does not arise, for if the ego has no real existence, now, it has none after death either.

D.: Do a person's actions in this life affect him in future births?

B.: Are you born now? Why do you think of future births? The truth is that there is neither birth nor death. Let him who is born think of death and palliatives for it.[1]

D.: Is the Hindu doctrine of reincarnation right?

B.: No definite answer is possible. Even the present incarnation is denied, for instance in the *Bhagavad Gita*.

D.: Isn't our personality beginningless?

B.: Find out first whether it exists at all and after you have solved that problem, ask the question. Nammalwar says: "In ignorance, I took the ego to be the Self, but with right knowledge the ego is not and only you remain as the Self". Both the non-dualists and the dualists agree on the necessity for Self-realisation. Attain that first and then raise other questions. Nondualism or dualism cannot be decided on theoretical grounds alone. If the Self is realised, the question will not arise.[2]

Whatever is born must die; whatever is acquired must be lost; but were you born? You are eternally existent. The Self can never be lost.[3]

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[1] T., 17.
[2] T., 491.
[3] T., 20.

Bhagavan, indeed, discouraged preoccupation with such questions since they merely distract one from the real task of realising the Self here and now.

D.: They say that we have the choice of enjoying merit or demerit after our death, that it depends on our choice which comes. Is that so?

B.: Why raise questions of what happens after death? Why ask whether you were born, whether you are reaping the fruits of your past karma, and so on? You will not raise such questions in a little while when you fall asleep. Why? Are you a different person now from the one you are when asleep? No, you are not. Find out why such questions do not occur to you when you are asleep.[1]

On occasion, however, Bhagavan did admit of a lower, contingent point of view for those who could not hold to the doctrine of pure non-dualism.

In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Sri Krishna first says to Arjuna in Chapter II, that no one was born and then in Chapter IV, 'there have been numerous incarnations both of you and me. I know them but you do not.' Which of these two statements is true? The teaching varies according to the understanding of the listener.[2]

When Arjuna said that he would not fight against his relatives and elders in order to kill them and gain the kingdom, Sri Krishna said: 'Not that these, you or I, were not before, are not now, nor will be hereafter. None was born, none has died, nor will it be so hereafter'. He further developed this theme, saying that he had given instructions to the Sun and through him to Ikshvaku; and Arjuna queried how that could be, since

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[1] T., 242.
[2] T., 436.

he had been born only a few years back, while they lived ages ago. Then Sri Krishna saw his point of view and said: 'Yes, there have been many incarnations of me and you. I know them all but you do not.'

Such statements appear contradictory, but they are true according to the viewpoint of the questioner. Christ also said "Before Abraham was, *I am*."[1]

Just as in dreams, you wake up after several new experiences, so after death another body is found.[2]

Just as rivers lose their individuality when they discharge their waters into the ocean, and yet the waters evaporate and return as rain on the hills and back again through the rivers to the ocean, so also individuals lose their individuality when they go to sleep but return again according to their previous innate tendencies. Similarly, in death also, being is not lost.

D.: How can that be?

B.: See how a tree grows again when its branches are cut off. So long as the life source is not destroyed, it will grow. Similarly, latent potentialities withdraw into the heart at death but do not perish. That is how beings are re-born.[3]

Nevertheless, from the higher viewpoint he would say:

In truth there is neither seed nor tree, there is only Being.[4]

He would occasionally explain in more detail, but still with the reservation that in reality there is only the changeless Self.

D.: How long is the interval between death and re-birth?

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[1] T., 145.
[2] T., 144.
[3] T., 108.
[4] T., 439.

B.: It may be long or short, but a Realised Man undergoes no such change; he merges into the Infinite Being, as is said in the *Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad*. Some say that those who, after death, take the path of light are not re-born; whereas those who take the path of darkness are born after they have reaped their karma (self-made destiny) in their subtle bodies.

If a man's merits and demerits are equal, he is re-born immediately on earth; if the merits outweigh the demerits, his subtle body goes first to heaven, while if the demerits outweigh the merits it goes first to hell. But in either case he is later re-born on earth. All this is described in the scriptures, but in fact there is neither birth nor death; one simply remains what one really is. That only is the truth.[1]

Again, he would explain in terms of God's mercy.

B.: God in His mercy withholds this knowledge from people. If they knew that they had been virtuous they would grow proud, and in the other case they would be despondent. Both are bad. It is enough to know the Self.[2]

He did, however, refer sometimes to a person's preparedness or maturity as being due to the achievements of a previous incarnation.

A competent person who has already, perhaps in a previous incarnation, qualified himself realises the truth and abides in peace as soon as he hears it told to him just once, whereas one who is not so qualified has to pass through the various stages before attaining *samadhi* (direct, pure consciousness of being).[3]

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[1] T., 573.
[2] T., 553.
[3] T., 21.

That is to say that a lifetime may be regarded as a day's journey upon the pilgrimage to Self-realisation. How far from the goal one starts depends on the effort or lack of effort made on the previous days; how far forward one advances depends on the effort of today.

A Science lecturer from a university asked whether the intellect survives a man's death and was told:

"Why think of death? Consider what happens in your sleep. What is your experience of that?"

D.: But sleep is transient, whereas death is not.

B.: Sleep is intermediate between two waking states, and in the same way death is intermediate between two births. Both are transient.

D.: I mean when the spirit is disembodied, does it carry the intellect with it?

B.: The spirit is not disembodied; the bodies differ. If not a gross body it will be a subtle one, as in sleep, dream or day-dream.[1]

Bhagavan would never admit that differences in mode of expression or formulation of doctrine between the various religions signified real contradiction, since the Truth to which they point is One and Immutable.

D.: Is the Buddhist view that there is no continuous entity answering to the idea of the individual soul right or not? Is this consistent with the Hindu doctrine of a reincarnating ego? Is the soul a continuous entity which reincarnates again and again, according to the Hindu doctrine, or is it a mere conglomeration of mental tendencies?

B.: The real Self is continuous and unaffected. The reincarnating ego belongs to a lower plane, that of thought. It is transcended by Self-realisation.

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[1] T., 206.

Reincarnations are due to a spurious offshoot of Being and are therefore denied by the Buddhists. The human state is due to a mingling of the sentient with the insentient.[1]

> Sometimes it was not a question of reincarnation but grieving over the death of a loved one. A lady who had come from North India asked Bhagavan whether it was possible to know the posthumous state of an individual.

B.: It is possible, but why try. Such facts are only as real as the person who seeks them.

L.: The birth of a person and his life and death are real to us.

B.: Because you wrongly identify yourself with the body, you think of the other also as a body. Neither you nor he is the body.

L.: But from my own level of understanding, I regard myself and my son as real.

B.: The birth of the 'I'-thought is a person's birth and its death is his death. After the 'I'-thought has arisen, the wrong identification with the body arises. Identifying yourself with the body makes you falsely identify others also with their bodies. Just as your body was born and grows and will die, so you think the other also was born, grew and died. Did you think of your son before he was born? The thought came after his birth and continues even after his death. He is your son only insofar as you think of him. Where has he gone? To the source from which he sprang. So long as you continue to exist, he does too. But if you cease to identify yourself with the body and realise the true Self, this confusion will vanish. You are eternal and others also will be found to be eternal. Until this is realised there will always

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[1] T., 136.

be grief due to false values which are caused by wrong knowledge and wrong identification.[1]

On the death of King George V, two devotees were discussing the matter in the hall and seemed upset. Bhagavan said: What is it to you who dies or is lost? Die yourself and be lost, becoming one with the Self of all (on the ego's extinction).[2]

> And finally, about the importance of death. Religions stress the importance of the frame of mind in which a person dies and his last thoughts at death. But Bhagavan reminded people that it is necessary to be well prepared beforehand; if not, undesirable tendencies will rise up at death, too powerful to be controlled.

D.: Even if I cannot realise in my lifetime, let me at least not forget on my death-bed. Let me have a glimpse of Reality at least at the moment of death, so that it may stand me in good stead in the future.

B.: It is said in the *Bhagavad Gita*, Chapter VIII, that whatever is a person's last thought at death determines his next birth. But it is necessary to experience Reality now, in this life, in order to experience it at death. Consider whether this present moment is any different from the last one at death and try to be in the desired state.[3]

HEART AND HEAD

> This seems a suitable place to set forth the Maharshi's teaching about heart and head. He taught that the heart, not the head, is the true seat of Consciousness; but by this he did not mean

[1] T., 276.
[2] T., 236.
[3] T., 621.

> the physical organ at the left side of the chest but the heart at the right, and by 'consciousness' he did not mean thought but pure awareness or sense of being. He had found this from his own experience to be the centre of spiritual awareness and then found his experience confirmed in some ancient texts. When his devotees were instructed to concentrate on the heart, it was this spiritual heart on the right that was referred to; and they also found it the centre of an actual, almost physical vibration of awareness. However, he would also speak of the Heart as equivalent to the Self and remind them that in truth it is not in the body at all, but is spaceless.

D.: Why do you say that the heart is on the right when biologists have found it to be on the left? What authority have you?

B.: No one denies that the physical organ is on the left; but the heart of which I speak is on the right. That is my experience and I require no authority for it; still you can find confirmation of it in a Malayali book on Ayurveda and in the *Sita Upanishad*.[1]

> Saying this, Bhagavan showed the quotation from the latter and quoted the text from the former. Sometimes, when asked, he referred also to the Biblical text from Ecclesiastes: "The wise man's heart is at the right hand and a fool's heart is at the left."[2]

D.: Why do we have a place such as the heart to concentrate on for meditation?

B.: Because you seek true Consciousness. Where can you find it? Can you attain it outside yourself? You have to find it internally. Therefore you are directed inward. The Heart is the seat of Consciousness or Consciousness itself.[3]

I ask you to observe where the 'I' arises in your body, but it is not really quite correct to say that the 'I' arises from and

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[1] T., 4.
[2] Ecclesiastes X, 2.
[3] T., 205.

merges in the chest at the right side. The Heart is another name for Reality and this is neither inside nor outside the body. There can be no in or out for it, since it alone is. I do not mean by 'heart' any physiological organ or any plexus or nerves or anything like that; but so long as a man identifies himself with the body or thinks he is in the body, he is advised to see where in the body the 'I'-thought arises and merges again. It must be the heart at the right side of the chest since every man of whatever race and religion and in whatever language he may be speaking, points to the right side of the chest to indicate himself when he says 'I'. This is so all over the world, so that must be the place. And by keenly watching the emergence of the 'I'-thought on waking and its subsidence on going to sleep, one can see that it is in the heart on the right side.[1]

When a room is dark you need a lamp to light it, but when the sun rises there is no need for a lamp; objects are seen without one. And to see the sun itself no lamp is needed because it is self-luminous. Similarly with the mind. The reflected light of the mind is necessary to perceive objects, but to see the heart it is enough for the mind to be turned towards it. Then the mind loses itself and the Heart shines forth.[2]

It is a tantric practice to concentrate on one of the *chakras* or spiritual centres of the body, very often on the point between the eyebrows. As will be shown in a later chapter, the heart on the right side is not one of these *chakras*; nevertheless, in the following passage, Bhagavan explains concisely his teaching that concentration on the heart-centre is more effective than on any other point but less effective than pure enquiry.

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[1] D. D., p. 234.
[2] T., 99.

D.: There are said to be six (subtle) organs of different colours in the chest, of which the spiritual heart is said to be the one situated two fingers' breadth, to the right from the centre! But the heart is also said to be formless. Does that mean that we should imagine it to have a form and meditate on this?

B.: No; only the quest – 'Who am I?' is necessary. That which continues to exist throughout sleep and waking is the same being in both; but while waking there is unhappiness and therefore the effort to remove it. When asked who awakes from sleep, you say 'I'. Hold fast to this 'I'. If that is done the Eternal Being reveals itself. The most important thing is the investigation of the 'I' and not concentration on the heart centre. There is no such thing as the 'inner' and the 'outer'. Both words mean the same or nothing at all. Nevertheless, there is also the practice of concentration on the heart-centre, which is a form of spiritual exercise. Only he who concentrates on the heart can remain aware when the mind ceases to be active and remains still, with no thoughts, whereas those who concentrate on any other centre cannot retain awareness without thought but only infer that the mind was still after it has become active again.[1]

In the following passage an English lady remarks on this awareness without thought and Bhagavan approves.

D.: Thoughts suddenly cease and 'I-I' rises up equally suddenly and continues. It is only a feeling, not a thought. Can it be right?

B.: Yes, it is quite right. Thoughts have to cease and reason to disappear for the 'I-I' to rise up and be felt. Feeling is the main thing, not reason.

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[1] T., 131.

D.: Moreover, it is not in the head, but at the right side of the chest.

B.: That is where it should be, because the heart is there.

D.: When I look outwards it disappears. What should I do?

B.: Hold fast to it.[1]

This does not mean that thought is impossible during the state of 'I' consciousness, as indeed one can see from the example of Bhagavan himself, who was permanently in that state. For the ignorant person, thought is like a dense cloud overhead, shutting him off from the illumination of the sun. When the ceiling of cloud has been broken and rolled back, letting in the light, he can use thought without being imprisoned by it. To change the metaphor, Bhagavan sometimes compared the mind of the Realised Man to the moon in the sky in day-time – it is there but its light is not needed – because one can see without it by the direct light of the sun.

SUFFERING

One of the problems about which Bhagavan was often asked was suffering. The questions were usually personal rather than academic, since it was often the experience of grief which drove people to seek solace from him. The real solace came as a silent influence, but he did also answer theoretical questions. The usual answer was to bid the questioner find out who it is that suffers, just as he would bid the doubter find who it is that doubts; for the Self is beyond suffering as it is beyond doubt. Sometimes, however, on a more contingent level, he would point out that whatever makes a person dissatisfied with his state of ignorance and turns him to the quest of the Self is beneficial and that it is often suffering which is the means of doing this.

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[1] T., 24.

B.: The Bliss of Self is always yours and you will find it if you seek it earnestly. The cause of your misery is not in your outer life; it is in you, as your ego. You impose limitations on yourself and then make a vain struggle to transcend them. All unhappiness is due to the ego. With it comes all your trouble. What does it avail you to attribute the cause of misery to the happenings of life when that cause is really within you? What happiness can you get from things extraneous to yourself? When you get it, how long will it last?

If you would deny the ego and scorch it by ignoring it, you would be free. If you accept it, it will impose limitations on you and throw you into a vain struggle to transcend them. That was how the 'thief' sought to ruin King Janaka.

To be the Self that you really are is the only means to realise the Bliss that is ever yours.[1]

A very devoted and simple devotee had lost his only son, a child of three. The next day he arrived at the Asramam with his family. Referring to them Bhagavan said: "Training of mind helps one to bear sorrows and bereavements with courage; but the loss of one's children is said to be the worst of all griefs. Grief only exists as long as one considers oneself to have a definite form; if the form is transcended, one knows the One Self to be eternal. There is neither death nor birth. What is born is only the body and this is the creation of the ego. But the ego is not ordinarily perceived without the body and so is identified with it. It is thought that matters. Let the sensible man consider whether he knew his body while in deep sleep. Why, then, does he feel it in the waking state? Although the body was not felt in sleep, did not the Self exist? What was his

[1] M. G., pp. 38-9.

state when in deep sleep and what is it now when awake? What is the difference? The ego rises up and that is waking. Simultaneously thoughts arise. Find out who has the thoughts. Where do they come from? They must arise from the conscious self. Apprehending this even vaguely helps towards the extinction of the ego. The realisation of the One Infinite Existence becomes possible. In that state there are no individuals but only Eternal Being. Hence there is no thought of death or grieving.

"If a man thinks that he is born he cannot escape the fear of death. Let him find out whether he was ever born or whether the Self takes birth. He will discover that the Self always exists and that the body which is born resolves itself into thought, and that the emergence of thought is the root of all mischief. Find where thought comes from, and then you will abide in the ever-present inmost Self and be free from the idea of birth and fear of death."[1]

D.: If some one we love dies, it causes grief. Should we avoid such grief by either loving all alike or not loving at all?

B.: If someone we love dies, it causes grief to the one who continues living. The way to get rid of grief is not to continue living. Kill the griever, and who will then remain to grieve? The ego must die. That is the only way. The two alternatives you suggest amount to the same. When all are realised to be the one Self, who is there to love or hate?[2]

> Sometimes, however, the questions were impersonal, referring not to some private tragedy but to the evil and suffering in the world. In such cases they were usually by visitors who did not understand the doctrine of non-duality or follow the path of Self-enquiry.

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[1] T., 80.
[2] T., 252.

Visitor: Widespread distress, such as famine and pestilence, spreads havoc through the world. What is the cause of this state of affairs?

B.: To whom does all this appear?

V.: That won't do. I see misery all round.

B.: You were not conscious of the world and its sufferings while asleep, but you are now that you are awake. Continue in the state in which you are not affected by such things. When you are not aware of the world, that is to say when you remain as the Self in the state of sleep, its sufferings do not affect you. Therefore turn inwards and seek the Self and there will be an end both of the world and of its miseries.

V.: But that is selfishness.

B.: The world is not external to you. Because you wrongly identify yourself with the body, you see the world outside you and its suffering becomes apparent to you; but the world and its sufferings are not real. Seek the reality and get rid of this unreal feeling.

This the visitor was unwilling to do, but instead referred again to suffering and to those who strive vainly to remove it.

V.: There are great men and public workers who cannot solve the problem of suffering in the world.

B.: That is because they are based on the ego. If they remained in the Self it would be different.

Still, presuming the absolute reality of the objective world, the visitor now asked in an indirect way how it would be different, demanding that those who abide in the Self should accept the unreal as Real.

V.: Why don't Mahatmas help?

For the moment, Bhagavan answers on the visitor's own level.

B.: How do you know that they don't? Public speeches, outer activity and material help are all outweighed by the silence of the Mahatmas. They accomplish more than others.

> Now, the visitor comes to the practical point: outer activity instead of inner quest; and Bhagavan rejects that viewpoint no less categorically.

V.: What can we do to ameliorate the condition of the world?

B.: If you remain free from pain there will be no pain anywhere. The trouble now is due to your seeing the world outside yourself and thinking there is pain in it. But both the world and the pain are within you. If you turn inwards there will be no pain.

V.: God is perfect. Why did he create the world imperfect? A work partakes of the nature of its author, but in this case it is not so.

B.: Are you something separate from God that you should ask this question? So long as you consider yourself the body, you see the world as external to you. It is to you that the imperfection appears. God is perfection and his work is also perfection, but you see it as imperfect because of your wrong identification with the body or the ego.

V.: Why did the Self manifest as this miserable world?

B.: In order that you might seek it. Your eyes cannot see themselves but if you hold a mirror in front of them they see themselves. Creation is the mirror. See yourself first and then see the whole world as the Self.

V.: Then what it amounts to is that I should always turn inwards?

B.: Yes.

V.: Shouldn't I see the world at all?

B.: You are not told to shut your eyes to the world, but only to see yourself first and then see the whole world as the Self. If you consider yourself as the body, the world appears to be external; if you are the Self, the world appears as Brahman manifested.[1]

The trouble is that it is extremely difficult to regard the body or the objective world as unreal. Bhagavan admitted that in the following dialogue.

D.: I have a toothache; is that only a thought?

B.: Yes.

D.: Then why can't I think that there is no toothache, and so cure myself?

B.: One does not feel the toothache when one is absorbed in other thoughts or when asleep.

D.: But still it remains.

B.: So strong is man's conviction of the reality of the world that it is not easily shaken off. But the world is no more real than the individual who sees it.

Then a humorous exchange which illustrates the difficulty of the concept.

D.: At present there is a Sino-Japanese war going on. If it is only in the imagination, can or will Sri Bhagavan imagine it not to be going on and so put an end to it?

B.: (*laughing*) The Bhagavan of the questioner (whom the questioner sees as an external being) is as much a thought of his as the Sino-Japanese War![2]

Finally, a quotation which shows how Bhagavan sometimes answered on a more contingent plane, pointing out that it is

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[1] T., 272.
[2] T., 451.

suffering that makes a man discontented with the life of the ego and spurs him on to seek Self-realisation.

D.: But why should there be suffering now?

B.: If there were no suffering, how could the desire to be happy arise? If that desire did not arise, how could the quest of the Self arise?

D.: Then is all suffering good?

B.: Yes. What is happiness? Is it a healthy and handsome body, regular meals and so on? Even an emperor has endless troubles although he may be in good health. So all suffering is due to the false notion 'I am the body'. Getting rid of this is knowledge.[1]

SIN

Sin and evil of every kind are the result of egoism unrestrained by consideration for the injury caused to others or the deleterious effect on the sinner's own character. Religions guard against them by moral and disciplinary codes and emotional appeals, seeking to keep the ego within bounds and prevent its trespassing into forbidden places. However, a spiritual path that is so radical and direct as to deny the ego itself does not need to attend specifically to the various excesses of egoism. All egoism has to be renounced. Therefore, non-duality turns the attack of the ego itself, not on its specific manifestations.

However sinful a person may be, if he would stop wailing inconsolably: 'Alas, I am a sinner: how shall I attain liberation?' and, casting away even the thought that he is a sinner, if he would zealously carry on meditation on the Self, he would most assuredly get reformed.[2]

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[1] T., 633.
[2] W., § 14.

> Similarly, a discipline which aims at transcending thought completely, in realisation of the super-rational Self, does not need to inveigh specifically against evil thoughts. All thoughts are distractions. An European lady asked whether good thoughts were not helpful in seeking Realisation, at any rate in the early stages, like the lower rungs of the ladder and was told:

Yes, insofar as they keep off bad thoughts; but they themselves must disappear before the state of Realisation.[1]

Because the quality of purity (*Sattva*) is the real nature of the mind, clearness like that of the unclouded sky is the characteristic of the mind-expanse. Being stirred up by the quality of activity (*rajas*) the mind becomes restless and, influenced by darkness (*tamas*), manifests as the physical world. The mind thus becoming restless on the one hand and appearing as solid matter on the other, the Real is not discerned. Just as fine silk threads cannot be woven with the use of a heavy iron shuttle, or the delicate shades of a work of art be distinguished in the light of a lamp flickering in the wind, so is Realisation of Truth impossible with the mind rendered gross by darkness (*tamas*) and restless by activity (*rajas*). Because truth is exceedingly subtle and serene. Mind will be cleared of its impurities only by a desireless performance of duties during several births, getting a worthy Master, learning from him and incessantly practising meditation on the Supreme. The transformation of the mind into the world of inert matter due to the quality of darkness (*tamas*) and its restlessness due to the quality of activity (*rajas*) will cease. Then the mind regains its subtlety and composure. The Bliss of the Self can manifest only in a mind rendered subtle and steady by assiduous meditation. He who experiences that Bliss is liberated even while still alive.[2]

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[1] T., 341.
[2] S. E., § 11.

He did, of course, insist on the need for purity. Sometimes a visitor would complain that he was too weak to resist his lower tendencies and would simply be told to try harder. According to his temperament he might be told to find who it is that has the lower tendencies, or to trust in God.

D.: I am a sinner and do not perform any religious duties. Shall I have a painful rebirth because of that?

B.: Why do you say you are a sinner? Faith in God is enough to save you from rebirth. Cast all your burden on Him. In the *Tiruvachakam* it is said: 'Though I am worse than a dog, You have graciously undertaken to protect me. The delusion of death and birth is maintained by You. Is it for me to sit and judge? Am I the Lord here? Almighty God, it is for You to roll me through many bodies, or keep me fixed at Your feet.' Therefore have faith and that will save you.[1]

D.: There is more pleasure in meditation than in sensual enjoyment and yet the mind seeks the latter and not the former. Why is that?

B.: Pleasure and pain are only aspects of the mind. Our essential nature is happiness, but we have forgotten the Self and imagine that the body or the mind is the Self. It is this wrong identification that gives rise to misery. What is to be done? This tendency is very deep-rooted and has continued for many past births and so has grown strong. It will have to go before the essential nature, which is happiness, can be realised.[2]

And above all, not to create new *vasanas* or latent tendencies.

D.: Swami, how can the grip of the ego be loosened?

B.: By not adding new *vasanas* (bad habits) to it.[3]

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[1] T., 30.
[2] T., 540.
[3] T., 173.

If the objective reality of the world be an illusion then the evil in it is also an illusion and the remedy is to turn inwards to the Reality of the Self. An American visitor, the secretary of Swami Yogananda, asked why there are good and evil in the world and was told:

They are relative terms. There must be a subject to know the good and evil. That subject is the ego. It ends in the Self. Or, you can say that the source of the ego is God. This definition is probably more definite and understandable for you.[1]

GOD

Superficially, it might seem that the Maharshi's statements about God were inconsistent, since he would sometimes enjoin complete faith and submission to God and sometimes speak of God as unreal; but actually there was no inconsistency. It must always be remembered that the purpose of his exposition was not to propound a philosophy but to give practical guidance on the spiritual path. Someone who could conceive of the non-dual Self could understand that it was his own Self and the Self of God and of the world also, whereas one who clung to the apparent reality of his ego could understand the Self only as the God who had created him. According to their needs he explained. In this, as in other matters, he pointed out the uselessness of discussion. Following either path was useful; theorising about them was not.

All religions postulate the three fundamentals: the world, the soul and God; but it is the One Reality that manifests itself as these three. One can say: 'The three are really three' only so long as the ego lasts. Therefore to inhere in one's own Being, when the ego is dead is the perfect state.

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[1] T., 106.

'The world is real', 'No, it is mere illusory appearance', 'The world is conscious,' 'No', 'The world is happiness', 'No,' – What use is it to argue thus? That state is agreeable to all wherein, having given up the objective outlook, one knows one's Self and loses all notions either of unity or duality, of oneself and the ego.

If one has form oneself, the world and God will also appear to have form; but if one is formless, who is to see these forms, and how? Without the eye can any object be seen? The seeing Self is the Eye, and that Eye is the Eye of Infinity.[1]

Brahman is not to be seen or known. It is beyond the three fold relationship of seer, sight and seen, or knower, knowledge and known. The Reality remains ever as it is. The existence of ignorance or the world is due to our illusion. Neither knowledge nor ignorance is real; what lies beyond them, as beyond all other pairs of opposites, is the Reality. It is neither light nor darkness but beyond both, though we sometimes speak of it as light and of ignorance as its shadow.[2]

> When there was genuine search for understanding, Bhagavan would explain in some details, always leading the seeker back to the doctrine of the One Self.

Mr. Thompson, a very quiet young gentleman who has been staying in India for some years and studying Hindu philosophy as an earnest student, asked: *Srimad Bhagavad Gita* says: 'I am the prop for Brahman'. In another place it says: 'I am in the Heart of each one'. Thus the different aspects of the Ultimate Principle are revealed. I take it that there are three aspects, namely: (1) the transcendental, (2) the immanent, and (3) the cosmic. Is Realisation to be in any of these or in all of

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[1] F. V., 2-4.
[2] D. D., p. 250.

them? Coming to the transcendental from the cosmic, Vedanta discards the names and forms as being maya. Again Vedanta also says that the whole is Brahman, as illustrated by gold and ornaments of gold. How are we to understand the truth?

B.: The *Gita* says: *Brahmano hi pratishtaham*. If that aham is known, the whole is known.

D.: That is the immanent aspect only.

B.: You now think that you are an individual; outside you there is the universe and beyond the universe is God. So there is the idea of separateness. The idea must go. For God is not separate from you or the cosmos. The *Gita* also says:

'I am the Self, O Gudakesa, seated in the heart of all beings; I am the beginning and the middle and also the end of all beings.'[1]

Thus God is not only in the heart of all, He is the prop of all. He is the source of all, their abiding place and their end. All proceed from Him, have their stay in Him, and finally resolve into Him. Therefore He is not separate.

D.: How are we to understand the line in the *Gita*: 'This whole cosmos forms a particle of me.'

B.: It does not mean that a small particle of God separates from Him and forms the universe. His shakti is acting; and as a result of one phase of such activity the cosmos has become manifest. Similarly the statement in *Purusha Sukta: Padosya viswa bhutani* (All beings form one of His parts) does not mean that Brahman is in four parts.

D.: I understand that. Brahman is certainly not divisible.

B.: So the fact is that Brahman is all and remains indivisible. He is ever realised. However, man does not know this; and it is just what he has to know. Knowledge means overcoming the obstacles which obstruct the revelation of the

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[1] *Bhagavad Gita*: X., 20.

Eternal Truth that the Self is the same as Brahman. The obstacles taken altogether form your idea of separateness as an individual. Therefore the present attempt will result in the truth being revealed that the Self is not separate from Brahman.[1]

> Christians, except for the greatest mystics, cling to the idea of a permanently real and separate ego. Sri Bhagavan had a discussion on this point with a Jesuit Father, but it remained inconclusive, Bhagavan trying to turn the Father's mind inwards to Self-enquiry and the Father demanding a theoretical exposition instead.

Dr. Emile Gathier, S. J., Professor of Philosophy at the Sacred Heart College, Shenbaganur, Kodaikanal, asked: Can you kindly give me a summary of your teachings?

B.: They are found in the booklets, particularly in *Who am I*?

D.: I shall read them. But may I have the central point of your teaching from your own lips?

B.: The central point is just the thing.

D.: It is not clear to me what you mean by that.

B.: That you should find the centre.

D.: I come from God. Isn't God distinct from me?

B.: Who asks this question? God does not. You do. So find who you are and then you may find out whether God is distinct from you.

D.: But God is perfect and I am imperfect. How can I ever know Him fully?

B.: God does not say so. It is you who ask the question. After finding out who you are, you may know what God is.

D.: But you have found your Self. Please let us know if God is distinct from you.

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[1] T., 649.

B.: It is a matter of experience. Each one must experience it for himself.

D.: Oh! I see. God is infinite and I am finite. I have a personality which can never merge into God. Isn't that so?

B.: Infinity and perfection do not admit of parts. If a finite being is apart from Infinity, the perfection of Infinity is marred. Thus your statement is a contradiction in terms.

D.: No, see, there is both God and creation.

B.: How are you aware of your personality?

D.: I have a soul. I know it by its activities.

B.: Did you know it in deep sleep?

D.: The activities are suspended in deep sleep.

B.: But you exist in sleep and you do now too. Which of these two is your real state?

D.: Sleep and waking are mere accidents. I am the substance behind the accidents.

(He looked up at the clock and said that it was time for him to catch the train. He left after thanking Sri Bhagavan. So the conversation ended abruptly).[1]

> The following talk takes up various problems which plague philosophers and theologians – Divine Omniscience and freewill; natural laws and divine activity; personal God and impersonal; and yet the tone of the answer shows that Bhagavan considers it of rather secondary importance.

D.: What is the relation between my freewill and the overshadowing might of the Omnipotent? (a) Is the Omnipotence of God consistent with the ego's free-will? (b) Is the Omniscience of God consistent with the ego's freewill? (c) Are natural laws consistent with God's freewill?

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[1] T., 602.

B.: Yes. Freewill is the present appearing to a limited faculty of sight and will. That same ego sees its past activity as falling into a course of 'law' or rules – its own freewill being one of the links in the course of law. The Omnipotence and Omniscience of God are then seen by the ego to have acted through the appearance of his own freewill. So he comes to the conclusion that the ego must go by appearances. Natural laws are manifestations of God's will and they have been laid down.[1]

The following dialogue is characteristic as showing refusal to discuss theory and insistence on the need for practice.

D.: Is God personal?

B.: Yes, He is always the first person, the I, ever standing before you. Because you give precedence to worldly things, God appears to have receded to the background. If you give up all else and seek Him alone, He will remain as the 'I', the Self.

D.: The final state of Realisation is said, according to Advaita, to be absolute union with the Divine, and according to *Visishtadvaita* a qualified union, while *Dvaita* maintains that there is no union at all. Which of these should be considered the correct view?

B.: Why speculate about what will happen at some time in the future? All are agreed that the 'I' exists. To whichever school of thought he may belong, let the earnest seeker first find out what the 'I' is. Then it will be time enough to know what the final state will be, whether the 'I' will get merged in the Supreme Being or stand apart from Him. Let us not forestall the conclusion, but keep an open mind.

D.: But will not some understanding of the final state be a helpful guide even to the aspirant?

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[1] T., 28.

B.: No purpose is served by trying to decide now what the final state of Realisation will be. It has no intrinsic value.

D.: Why not?

B.: Because you proceed on a wrong principle. Your conclusion is arrived at by the intellect which shines only by the light it derives from the Self. Is it not presumptuous on the part of the intellect to sit in judgement over that from which it derives its little light? How can the intellect, which can never reach the Self, be competent to ascertain and much less decide the nature of the final state of Realisation? It is like trying to measure the sunlight at its source by the standard of the light given by a candle. The wax will melt down before the candle comes anywhere near the sun. Instead of indulging in mere speculation, devote yourself here and now to the search for the Truth that is ever within you.[1]

> Sometimes questions were also asked about the multiple gods of Hinduism. In this connection it should be explained that Hindus, like Christians or Muslims worship the One God. Some of the questions about God recorded above were put by Hindus. However, they also worship God manifested in various forms, one possibility or name or form or viewpoint not negating another.

D.: Why are so many gods mentioned?

B.: The body is only one, but how many functions are performed by it! The source of all these functions is one. It is the same with the gods.[2]

> It would sometimes be asked whether the various gods and their heavens were real. But such a question starts from the presumption of the reality of this physical world and the questioner's body – a presumption which Bhagavan would

[1] M. G., pp. 44-5.
[2] T., 371.

not admit. Instead, he would turn this question, like all others, to the quest for Reality.

D.: Are the Gods, Ishvara and Vishnu, and their heavens, Kailas and Vaikuntha, real?

B.: As real as you are in this body.

D.: I mean, have they got a phenomenal existence like my body, or are they pure fictions like the horns of a hare?

B.: They do exist.

D.: If so, they must be somewhere; where are they?

B.: In you.

D.: Then they are only my idea; something which I create and control?

B.: Everything is.

D.: But I can create a pure fiction like the horns of a hare, or a partial truth, like a mirage; while there are also facts which exist irrespective of my imagination. Do the gods, Ishvara and Vishnu, exist like that?

B.: Yes.

D.: Is God subject to cosmic dissolution at the end of a cycle?

B.: Why should He be? A man who realises the Self transcends cosmic dissolution and is liberated; why should not Ishvara (God) who is infinitely wiser and abler than a man?

D.: Do gods and devils also exist?

B.: Yes.

D.: How are we to conceive of Supreme Divine Consciousness?

B.: As that which is.[1]

Particularly interesting are the questions asked by a Muslim professor about the hymns which Bhagavan wrote to God in the form of Arunachala.

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[1] T., 30

D.: I have been reading the Five Hymns. I find that the hymns are addressed by you to Arunachala. But you are a non-dualist, so how can you address God as a separate Being?

B.: The devotee, God and the hymns are all the Self.

D.: But you are addressing God. You are specifying this Arunachala Hill as God.

B.: You can identify the Self with the body, so why shouldn't the devotees identify the Self with Arunachala?

D.: If Arunachala is the Self, why should it be specifically picked out among so many other hills? God is everywhere. Why do you specify Him as Arunachala?

B.: What has attracted you from Allahabad to this place? What has attracted all these people around?

D.: Sri Bhagavan.

B.: How was I attracted here? By Arunachala. The Power cannot be denied. Again Arunachala is within and not without. The Self is Arunachala.

D.: Several terms are used in the holy books. *Atman, Paramatman, Para,* etc. What is the gradation among them?

B.: They mean the same to the user of the words but they are understood differently by various persons according to their development.

D.: But why do you use so many words to mean the same thing?

B.: It depends on the circumstances. They all mean the Self. *Para* means not relative, or beyond the relative, that is to say the Absolute.[1]

Bhagavan would often make remarks, which the superficial critic might take to be agnostic or atheistic, just as has been done by superficial critics of the Buddha. For instance he might say:

[1] T., 273.

Why worry about God? We do not know whether God exists but we know that we exist, so first concentrate on yourself. Find out who you are.

> There was no agnosticism, since Bhagavan, like the Buddha, spoke from perfect knowledge. He was simply placing himself in the position of the questioner and advising him to concentrate rather on what he knew than what he merely believed in. Sometimes he would tell people not to trouble whether there is God or whether Realization implies unity with God or not but simply to strive to realise the Self, and when that was achieved they would know. Theorising about it would not help them.

The Malayalam version of *Ulladu Narpadu* (Forty Verses) was read out by a devotee for the benefit of a visitor. After hearing it, the latter asked: What about the reference to duality during one's effort and unity at the end?[1]

B.: It refers to people who think one must begin one's spiritual striving with a dualistic idea. They say that there is God and that one must worship and meditate until ultimately the individual merges into God. Others say that the individual and the Supreme Being always remain separate and never merge. But let's not worry now about what happens at the end. All agree that the individual exists now. So let a man discover it – that is discover his Self. There will be time enough afterwards to find out whether the Self is to merge in the Supreme or is a part of it or remains separate. Let us not forestall the conclusion. Keep an open mind, dive within and find the Self. The truth will dawn upon you all right, so why try to decide beforehand whether it is absolute or qualified unity or duality? There is no meaning in doing so. Your decision would have to be made by

[1] F. V., 37.

logic and intellect, but the intellect derives its light from the Self (the Highest Power) so how can its reflected and partial light envisage the entire and original light? The intellect cannot attain to the Self, so how can it ascertain its nature?[1]

While explaining to an American lady, Bhagavan said:

The Self alone is Real. All else is unreal. The mind and intellect have no existence apart from you. The Bible says: 'Be still and know that I am God'. Stillness is the only thing needed to realise that 'I am' is God.

Later he added:

The whole Vedanta is contained in the two Biblical statements 'I am that I am' and 'Be still and know that I am God'.[2]

For one who found Self-enquiry too difficult, he would recommend worship and submission.

D.: What should one think of when meditating?

B.: What is meditation? It is the suspension of thoughts. You are perturbed by thoughts which rush one after another. Hold on to one thought so that others are expelled. Continuous practice gives the necessary strength of mind to engage in meditation. Meditation differs according to the degree of advancement of the seeker. If one is fit for it one can hold directly to the thinker; and the thinker will automatically sink into his source, which is Pure Consciousness. If one cannot directly hold on to the thinker, one must meditate on God; and in due course the same individual will have become sufficiently pure to hold on to the thinker and sink into the absolute Being.[3]

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[1] T., 63.
[2] T., 338.
[3] T., 453.

In case the path of worship was chosen, he demanded absolute surrender.

D.: God is described as manifest and unmanifest. As the former, He is said to include the world as a part of His Being. If that is so, we, as part of the world, should find it easy to know Him in His manifested form.

B.: Know yourself before you seek to know the nature of God and the world.

D.: Does knowing myself imply knowing God?

B.: Yes, God is within you.

D.: Then, what stands in the way of my knowing myself or God?

B.: Your wandering mind and perverted ways.

D.: I am a weak creature. But why does not the superior power of the Lord within remove the obstacles?

B.: Yes, He will, if you have the aspiration.

D.: Why should He not create the aspiration in me?

B.: Then surrender yourself.

D.: If I surrender myself, is no prayer to God necessary?

B.: Surrender itself is a mighty prayer.

D.: But is it not necessary to understand His nature before one surrenders oneself?

B.: If you believe that God will do all the things that you want Him to do, then surrender yourself to Him. Otherwise let God alone, and know yourself.[1]

If there be true surrender, there can be no complaint or frustration.

D.: We are worldly people and are afflicted by some grief that we cannot get over. We pray to God and are still not satisfied. What should we do?

B.: Trust God.

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[1] M. G., pp. 42-3.

D.: We surrender but still there is no help.

B.: But if you have surrendered, it means that you must accept the will of God and not make a grievance of what may not happen to please you. Things may turn out differently from what they appear. Distress often leads people to faith in God.

D.: But we are worldly people. We have wife, children, friends and relations. We cannot ignore them and resign ourselves to the Divine will without retaining some trace of individuality.

B.: That means that you have not really surrendered, as you say you have. All you need to do is to trust God.[1]

Following the path of devotion, one should leave everything to God.

The Lord bears the burden of the world. Know that the spurious ego which presumes to bear that burden is like a sculptured figure at the foot of a temple tower which appears to sustain the tower's weight. Whose fault is it if the traveller, instead of putting his luggage in the cart which bears the load anyway, carries it on his head, to his own inconvenience?[2]

There cannot even be impatience for speedy realisation. To one who was so afflicted, he replied:

Surrender to Him and accept His will whether He appears or vanishes. Await His pleasure. If you want Him to do as you want, it is not surrender but command. You cannot ask Him to obey you and yet think you have surrendered. He knows what is best and when and how to do it. Leave everything entirely to Him. The burden is His and you have no more cares. All your cares are His. That is what is meant by surrender.[3]

[1] T., 43.
[2] F. V. S., 17.
[3] T., 450.

Even prayer can betoken a lack of trust and Bhagavan did not normally encourage prayer in the sense of petition.

They pray to God and finish with: 'Thy will be done'. If His will be done, why do they pray at all? It is true that the Divine will prevails at all times and under all circumstances. Individuals cannot act of their own accord. Recognise the force of the Divine will and keep quiet. Everyone is looked after by God. He created all. You are only one among two thousand millions. When He looks after so many, will He omit you? Even common sense dictates that one should accept His will.

There is no need to tell Him your requirements. He knows them Himself and will look after them.[1]

On other occasions, however, he would confirm the efficacy of prayer. As in other matters, he would put the viewpoint which would best help the spiritual development of the particular questioner.

D.: Are our prayers granted?

B.: Yes, they are granted. No thought will ever go in vain. Every thought will produce its effect some time or other. Thought force will never go in vain.[2]

It will be seen that this hints at a doctrine far wider than personal response by an anthropomorphic God. It indicates the general power of thought for good or evil and its repercussions on the thinker. Understanding of this involves a great responsibility for thoughts no less than for actions, just as Christ indicated that to look at a woman lustfully was a sin, the same as committing adultery with her. The following passage shows how far this teaching was from any humanised conception of a God.

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[1] T., 594.

[2] D. D., p. 266-7.

Not from any desire, resolve, or effort on the part of the rising sun, but merely due to the presence of his rays, the lens emits heat, the lotus blossoms, water evaporates, and people attend to their various duties in life. In the proximity of the magnet the needle moves. Similarly, the soul or *jiva* subjected to the threefold activity of creation, preservation and destruction, which takes place merely due to the unique Presence of the Supreme Lord, performs acts in accordance with its karma, and subsides to rest after such activity. But the Lord Himself has no resolve; no act or event touches even the fringe of His Being. This state of immaculate aloofness can be likened to that of the sun, which is untouched by the activities of life, or to that of the all-pervasive ether, which is not affected by the interaction of the complex qualities of the other four elements.[1]

RELIGIONS

It should be clear from what we said in previous section that Bhagavan's teaching was not opposed to any religion. If philosophers or theologians wished to argue whether the human soul was permanently and essentially separate from the Divine Being, he would refuse to join issue with them but try to turn them to spiritual effort instead, as, for instance, in his talk with a Jesuit priest on page 39. When they attained Realisation they would know, and theoretical knowledge without Realisation would not help them anyway.

Strictly speaking, Bhagavan was not exclusively a Hindu or subject to Hindu ritual, since Hinduism recognises that one who is established in constant, conscious identity with the Self is above all religions; he is the mountain peak towards which

[1] W., § 17.

the various paths converge. Bhagavan had many followers who were not Hindus – Christians, Muslims, Parsis and others – and none was ever recommended to change his religion.

A religion involves two modes of activity; what might be called the horizontal and the vertical. Horizontally it harmonises and controls the life of the individual and society in conformity with its faith and morality, giving opportunity and incentive for a good life leading to a good death. Vertically it provides spiritual paths for those who strive to attain a higher state or realise the ultimate truth during this life on earth. Horizontally, religions are mutually exclusive, but not really contradictory. Bhagavan was concerned rather with the vertical mode, the paths to realisation, and therefore his teaching clashed with no religion. He guided those who would follow him on the most direct and central path, the quest of the Self; and for this any religion could serve as a foundation. He approved of every religion and if some devotees came to him who followed no formal religion, he did not insist they should do so. When asked about the different religious practices, he would stress their deeper meaning, and about different religions their basic unity.

D.: What is yoga?

B.: Yoga (union) is necessary for one who is in a state of *viyoga* (separation). But really there is only one. If you realise the Self there will be no difference.

D.: Is there any efficacy in bathing in the Ganges?

B.: The Ganges is within you. Bathe in this Ganges; it will not make you shiver with cold.

D.: Should we sometimes read the *Bhagavad Gita*?

B.: Always.

D.: May we read the Bible?

B.: The Bible and the *Gita* are the same.

D.: The Bible teaches that man is born in sin.

B.: Man is sin. There is no feeling of being man is deep sleep. The body-thought brings out the idea of sin. The birth of thought itself is sin.

D.: The Bible says that the human soul may be lost.

B.: The 'I'-thought is the ego and that is lost. The real 'I' is 'I am that I am'.[1]

The doctrine of the Trinity was explained: God the Father is equivalent to Ishwara, God the Son to the Guru, and God the Holy Ghost to the Atman. *Isvaro gururatmeti murti bheda vibhagine vyomavad vyapta dehaya dakshinamurtaye namah*, means that God appears to His devotee in the form of a Guru (Son of God) and points out to him the immanence of the Holy Spirit.

That is to say, that God is Spirit, that this Spirit is immanent everywhere and that the Self must be realised, which is the same as realising God.[2]

> He protested against being satisfied with formal heavens, whether Hindu or any other, because so long as there is form there remains seer, sight and seen and not the One Self.

D.: There is a short account of the spiritual experiences of St. Theresa, in the March number of *Prabuddha Bharata*. She was devoted to a figure of the Madonna which became animated to her sight and she was in bliss. Is this the same as *saktipata*?

B.: The animated figure indicates the depth of meditation (*dhyana bala*). *Saktipata* prepares the mind for introversion. There is a process of concentration of the mind on one's own shadow which in due course becomes animated and answers questions put to it. That is due to strength of mind or depth of meditation. Whatever is external is also transitory. Such

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[1] T., 164.
[2] T., 90.

phenomena may produce joy for the time being, but abiding peace (*Shanti*) does not result. That is got only by the removal of *avidya* (ignorance).[1]

D.: Can't we see God in concrete form?

B.: Yes. God is seen in the mind. A concrete form may be seen but still it is only in the devotees' mind. The form and appearance in which God manifests are determined by the mind of the devotee. But that is not the ultimate experience. There is a sense of duality in it. It is like a dream or vision. After God is perceived, Self-enquiry begins and that leads to Realisation of the Self. Self-enquiry is the ultimate route.[2]

Sometimes his answers were cryptic and epigrammatical. The same universal truth is to be found in them; their rather prickly form may reflect the aggressive manner of the questioner.

Q.: What is the best of all religions? What is Bhagavan's method?

B.: All methods and religions are the same.

Q.: But different methods are taught for attaining liberation.

B.: Why should you be liberated? Why not remain as you are now?

Q.: I want to get rid of pain. To be rid of pain is said to be liberation.

B.: That is what all Religions teach.

Q.: But what is the method?

B.: Go back the way you came.*

Q.: Where did I come from?

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[1] T., 393.

[2] T., 251.

* Cf. Christ's injunction to return to the mother's womb and be born again.

B.: That is just what you have to find out. Did these questions arise when you were asleep? And yet you existed then. Were you not the same person?

Q.: Yes, I existed in sleep. So did the mind. But the senses had merged so that I could not speak.

B.: Are you the individual? Are you the mind? Did the mind announce itself to you when you were asleep?

Q.: No. But the authorities say that the individuality is different from God.

B.: Never mind about God; speak for yourself.

Q.: What about myself? Who am I?

B.: That is just what you have to find out. Then you will know everything. If you do not, it will be time enough to ask then.

Q.: When I wake, I see the world and I am not changed at all.

B.: But you do not know this when asleep. And yet you exist in both states. Who has changed now? Is it your nature to change or to remain unchanging?

Q.: What is the proof?

B.: Does one require proof of one's own being? Only remain aware of yourself and all else will be known.

Q.: Why then do the dualists and non-dualists quarrel among themselves?

B.: If each would attend to his own business (of seeking Realisation) there would be no quarrel.[1]

> Spiritual experience may be differently expressed because some form must be given to the Formless in order to express them at all, but essentially they are the same.

D.: Is the experience of the highest state the same to all, or is there any difference?

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[1] T., 479.

B.: The highest state is the same and the experience is the same.

D.: But I find some difference in the interpretation given of the highest truth.

B.: The interpretations are made with the mind. The minds are different, so the interpretations also differ.

D.: I mean to say that the seers express themselves differently.

B.: Their modes of expression may differ according to the nature of the seekers for whose guidance they are intended.

D.: One speaks in terms of Christianity, another of Islam, a third of Buddhism, etc. Is that due to their upbringing?

B.: Whatever may be their upbringing, their experience is the same. Only the modes of expression differ according to circumstances.[1]

So also with different paths or schools within a religion.

D.: Different teachers have set up different schools and proclaimed different truths and so confused people. Why?

B.: They have all taught the same truth but from different standpoints. Such differences were necessary to meet the needs of different minds differently constituted, but they all reveal the same truth.

D.: Since they have recommended different paths, which is one to follow?

B.: You speak of paths as if you were somewhere and the Self somewhere else and you had to go and attain it. But in fact the Self is here and now and you are It always. It is like being here and asking people the way to Ramanasramam and then complaining that each one shows a different path and asking which to follow.[2]

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[1] T., 595.

[2] D. D., p. 270.

While confirming the various religions, Bhagavan at the same time urged people to get beyond them to the One Self. Paul Brunton, author of *A Search In Secret India* asked him about the various doctrines of heaven and hell.

D.: Why do religions speak of gods, heaven, hell etc?

B.: Only to make people realise that they are on a par with this world and that the Self alone is real. The religions are according to the viewpoint of the seeker. (Take the *Bhagavad Gita* for instance; when Arjuna said that he would not fight against his own relations and elders, in order to kill them and gain the kingdom, Sri Krishna said: 'Not that these, you or I were not before, are not now, nor will be hereafter. None was born, none has died, nor will it be so hereafter' and so on. Later, as he developed the theme and declared that He had given the same instruction to the Sun, through him to Ikshvaku, etc. Arjuna raised the doubt: 'How can that be? You were born a few years ago. They lived ages ago'. Then Sri Krishna, understanding Arjuna's standpoint, said: 'Yes, there have been many incarnations of myself and yourself; I know them all, but you do not'). Such statements appear contradictory, but still both are right according to the point of view of the questioner. Christ also declared "Before Abraham was, *I am*."

D.: What is the purpose of such descriptions in religion?

B.: Only to establish the reality of the Self.

D.: Bhagavan always speaks from the highest standpoint.

B.: (*smiling*): People will not understand the bare and simple truth – the truth of their everyday, ever-present and eternal experience. That is the truth of the Self. Is there any one not aware of the Self? Yet, they do not even like to hear of it, whereas they are eager to know what lies beyond – heaven and hell and reincarnation. Because they love mystery and not the plain truth, religions pamper

them – only to bring them round to the Self in the end. Moreover, much as you may wander you must return ultimately to the Self; so why not abide in the Self here and now?[1]

> A passage was quoted above in which the questioner was recommended to read the Gita or the Bible constantly; and yet on other occasions people were reminded that their scriptures also have to be superseded.

All the scriptures are meant only to make a man retrace his steps to his original source. He need not acquire anything new. He only has to give up false ideas and useless accretions. Instead of doing this, however, he tries to grasp something strange and mysterious because he believes his happiness lies elsewhere. That is the mistake.[2]

All scriptures without exception proclaim that for attaining salvation, the mind should be subdued. And once one knows that control of the mind is their final aim, it is futile to make an interminable study of them. What is required for such control is actual enquiry into oneself by self-interrogation – 'Who am I?' How can this enquiry in quest of the Self be made by means of a studying of the scriptures?[3]

One should realise the Self by the Eye of wisdom. Does Rama need a mirror to recognise himself as Rama?[4] That to which 'I' refers is within the five sheaths, whereas the scriptures are outside them. Therefore, it is futile to seek by means of the study of the scriptures, the Self that has to be realised by summarily rejecting even the five sheaths.[5]

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[1] T., 145.
[2] T., 252.
[3] W., § 23.
[4] *Ibid.*, § 20.
[5] W., § 23

To enquire 'who am I that is in bondage?' and to know one's real nature alone is Liberation. To keep the mind constantly turned within and to abide thus in the Self is alone *Atmavichara* (Self-enquiry), whereas *dhyana* (meditation) consists in fervent contemplation of the Self as *Sat-Chit-Ananda* (Being-Consciousness-Bliss).[1] Indeed, at some time, one will have to forget everything that has been learnt.[2]

The Realised Man stands forth as That to which all the attributes enumerated by the scriptures refer. To him therefore, these sacred texts are of no use whatever.[3]

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[1] W., § 27.
[2] Ibid., § 23.
[3] S.I., Chap. IV, § 9.

CHAPTER TWO

FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

As was shown in the previous chapter, the theory that the Maharshi taught was intended only to serve as a basis for practice. However, the demand for practice brought in another branch of theory, that of free-will or predestination, since people were not lacking who asked why they should make any effort if everything was predestined, or if all men returned to their Source in any case.

A visitor from Bengal said: Shankara says that we are all free, not bound, and that we shall all return to God from whom we came, like sparks from a fire. If that is so, why should we not commit all sorts of sins?

Bhagavan's reply showed him that that cannot be the point of view of the ego.

B.: It is true that we are not bound. That is to say, the real Self has no bondage. And it is true that you will eventually return to your Source. But meanwhile, if you commit sins, as you call them, you have to face the consequences. You cannot escape them. If a man beats you, can you say: 'I am free. I am not affected by the beating and feel no pain. Let him continue beating'? If you can really feel that, then you can do what you like, but what is the use of just saying in words that you are free?[1]

Bhagavan did sometimes make pronouncements which seemed superficially like affirmations of complete predestination. When

[1] D. D., p. 298-9.

he left home in his youth, already established in Self-realisation, his mother sought and at last found him. He was maintaining silence at that time; therefore, on her request to return home with her, he wrote out his reply instead of replying verbally:

The Ordainer controls the fate of souls in accordance with their *prarabdhakarma* (destiny to be worked out in this life, resulting from the balance sheet of actions in past lives). Whatever is destined not to happen will not happen, try as you may. Whatever is destined to happen will happen, do what you may to prevent it. This is certain. The best course, therefore, is to remain silent.[1]

He sometimes also made such statements to devotees.

All the activities that the body is to go through are determined when it first comes into existence. It does not rest with you to accept or reject them. The only freedom you have is to turn your mind inward and renounce activities there.[2]

With reference to Bhagavan's reply to Mrs. Desai on the evening of January 3, 1946, I asked him: Are only the important events in a man's life, such as his main occupation or profession, predetermined, or are trifling acts also, such as taking a cup of water or moving from one part of the room to another?

B.: Everything is predetermined.

I: Then what responsibility, what free will has man?

B.: Why does the body come into existence? It is designed for the various things that are marked out for it in this life.... As for freedom, a man is always free not to identify himself with the body and not to be affected by the pleasures and pains consequent on its activities.[3]

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[1] R. M., p. 41.
[2] D. D., p. 245.
[3] D. D., pp. 91-2.

Actually, however, the question of free will or predestination does not arise at all from the point of view of non-duality. It is as though a group of people who had never heard of radio were to stand round a wireless set arguing whether the man in the box has to sing what the transmitting station tells him to or whether he can change parts of the songs. The answer is that there is no man in the box and therefore the question does not arise. Similarly, the answer to the question of whether the ego has free will or not is that there is no ego and therefore the question does not arise. Therefore Bhagavan's usual response to the question would be to bid the questioner find out who it is that has free will or predestination.

D.: Has man any free will or is everything in his life predetermined?

The same question as above, but the answer differs according to the needs of the questioner. In fact, if one does not bear in mind what has just been said about the unreality of the ego it seems to be quite contradictory.

B.: Free will exists together with the individuality. As long as the individuality lasts, so long is there free will. All the scriptures are based on this fact and advise directing the free will in the right channel.

Is this really a contradiction of the reply given earlier? No, because, according to Bhagavan's teaching, individuality has only an illusory existence. So long as one imagines that one has a separate individuality, so long does one also imagine its free will. The two exist together inevitably. The problem of predestination and free will has always plagued philosophers and theologians and will always continue to do so, because it is insoluble on the plane of duality, that is on the supposition of one being who is the Creator and a lot of other, separate beings who are created. If they have free will, then he is not omnipotent and omniscient – he does not know what will happen, because it depends on what they decide; and he cannot control all happenings because they have the power to change them. On the other hand, if he is omniscient and omnipotent he has fore-knowledge of all that will happen

> and controls everything, and therefore they can have no power of decision, that is to say no free will. But on the level of advaita or non-duality the problem fades out and ceases to exist. In truth the ego has no free will, because there is no ego; but on the level of apparent reality the ego consists of free will – it is the illusion of free will that creates the illusion of the ego. That is what Bhagavan meant by saying that "as long as the individuality lasts, so long is there free will." The next sentence in his answer turns the questioner away from theory to practice.

Find out who it is who has free will or predestination and abide in that state. Then both are transcended. That is the only purpose in discussing these questions. To whom do such questions present themselves? Discover that and be at peace.[1]

The only path of karma (action), *bhakti* (devotion), yoga and *jnana* (knowledge) is to enquire who it is who has the karma, *vibhakti* (lack of devotion), *viyoga* (separation) and *ajnana* (ignorance). Through this investigation, the ego disappears and the state of abidance in the Self, in which none of these negative qualities ever existed, remains as the Truth.[2]

As long as a man is the doer he also reaps the fruits of his deeds, but as soon as he realises the Self through enquiry as to who the doer is, his sense of being the doer falls away and the triple karma (destiny) is ended. This is the state of eternal liberation.[3]

Bhagavan said: "We are all really *Sat-chit-ananda* (Being-Knowledge-Bliss) but we imagine that we are bound (by destiny) and have all this suffering."

I asked him why we imagine this, why this state of ignorance (*ajnana*) comes over us.

Bhagavan said: "Ask yourself to whom this ignorance has come and you will discover that it never came to you and that

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[1] T., 426.
[2] F. V. S., 14.
[3] F. V., 38.

you always have been *Sat-chit-ananda*. One goes through all sorts of austerities to become what one already is. All effort is simply to get rid of the mistaken impression that one is limited and bound by the woes of *samsara* (this life).[1]

D.: Is there predestination? And if what is destined to happen will happen, is there any use in prayer or effort or should we just remain idle?

> This is a concise form of the question which Bhagavan was so often asked, and the reply is typical in that it does not expound theory but prescribes what to do.

B.: There are only two ways in which to conquer destiny or be independent of it. One is to enquire who undergoes this destiny and discover that only the ego is bound by it and not the Self, and that the ego is non-existent. The other way is to kill the ego by completely surrendering to the Lord, by realising one's helplessness and saying all the time: 'Not I, but Thou, Oh, my Lord', and giving up all sense of 'I' and 'mine' and leaving it to the Lord to do what he likes with you. Surrender can never be regarded as complete so long as the devotee wants this or that from the Lord. True surrender is love of God for the sake of love and for nothing else, not even for the sake of salvation. In other words, complete effacement of the ego is necessary to conquer destiny, whether you achieve this effacement through Self enquiry or through *bhakti-marga*.[2]

> This mode of reply is common to spiritual teachers. I remember once reading the life of a Sufi saint, Abu Said, by Professor Nicholson, in which the learned author concluded that he seems to have taught predestination in theory but free will in practice. Puzzling as it may be for the philosopher, this

[1] D. D., pp. 48-9.
[2] D. D., p. 266.

> is the attitude of all spiritual teachers, just as Christ affirmed that not even a sparrow can fall without the will of God, and that the very hairs on one's head are numbered, just as the Quran affirms that all knowledge and power are with God and that He leads aright whom He will and leads astray whom He will; and yet both Christ and the Quran exhort men to right effort and condemn sin. Bhagavan was quite categorical that effort is necessary. In actual life everyone realises this, whatever theoretical view he may hold. A man makes the physical effort of putting the food in his mouth and eating; he does not say: What is the use of eating if I am predestined to die of starvation? He makes the mental effort of earning the money to buy food to eat. Why should he, then, apply a different logic when it comes to spiritual effort?

A young man from Colombo, Ceylon, said to Bhagavan: J. Krishnamurthi teaches the method of effortless and choiceless awareness as distinct from that of deliberate concentration. Would Sri Bhagavan be pleased to explain how best to practise meditation and what form the object of meditation should take?

B.: Effortless and choiceless awareness is our real nature. If we can attain that state and abide in it, that is all right. But one cannot reach it without effort, the effort of deliberate meditation. All the age-old *vasanas* (inherent tendencies) turn the mind outwards to external objects. All such thoughts have to be given up and the mind turned inwards and that, for most people, requires effort. Of course, every teacher and every book tells the aspirant to keep quiet, but it is not easy to do so. That is why all this effort is necessary. Even if we find somebody who has achieved this supreme state of stillness, you may take it that the necessary effort had already been made in a previous life. So effortless and choiceless awareness is attained only after deliberate meditation. That meditation can take whatever form most appeals to you. See what helps you to keep out all other thoughts and adopt that for your meditation.

In this connection Bhagavan quoted some verses from the great Tamil poet and saint, Thayumanavar, the gist of which is as follows: Bliss will ensue if you keep still, but however much you tell your mind this truth, it will not keep still. It is the mind that tells the mind to be still in order for it to attain bliss, but it will not do it. Though all the scriptures have said it and though we hear it daily from the great ones and even from our Guru, we are never quiet but stray into the world of Maya (illusion) and sense objects. That is why conscious, deliberate effort is needed to attain that effortless state of stillness.[1]

> Indeed, until the supreme, effortless state is attained, it is impossible for a man not to make effort. His own nature compels him to, just as Sri Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita* told Arjuna that his own nature would compel him to fight.

D.: I want to be further enlightened. Should I try to make no effort at all?

B.: Now it is impossible for you to be without effort. When you go deeper, it is impossible for you to make effort.[2]

D.: What is the difference between meditation and *samadhi* or absorption in the Self?

B.: Meditation is initiated and sustained by a conscious effort of the mind. When such effort entirely subsides, it is called *samadhi*.[3]

B.: If you can keep still without engaging in any other pursuits, well and good. But if that cannot be done, what is the use of remaining inactive only with regard to realisation? So long as you are obliged to be active, do not give up the attempt to realise the Self.[4]

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[1] D. D., p. 104.
[2] S. D. B., iv.
[3] S. I.,Chap.II, § 15.
[4] T., 255.

Meditation is a fight. As soon as you begin meditation, other thoughts will crowd together, gather force and try to overwhelm the single thought to which you try to hold. This thought must gradually gain strength by repeated practice. When it has grown strong, the other thoughts will be put to flight. This is the battle always going on in meditation.[1]

So long as the ego lasts, effort is necessary. When the ego ceases to exist, actions become spontaneous.[2]

No one succeeds without effort. Mind control is not your birthright. The few who succeed owe their success to their perseverence.[3]

Sometimes glimpses of Realisation are attained before it becomes permanent, and in such cases effort still continues to be necessary.

Effort is necessary up to the state of Realisation. Even then, the Self should spontaneously become evident; otherwise happiness will not be complete. Up to that state of spontaneity there must be effort in some form or another.[4]

Sometimes right effort is referred to as a duty.

D.: Why should I try to get Realisation? I shall emerge from this state of illusion just as I wake up from a dream. We do not make any effort to get out of a dream when we are asleep.

B.: In a dream you have no inkling that it is a dream, and therefore no obligation to make an effort to get out of it. But in this life you have some intuition based on your experience of sleep and on what you hear and read, that it is a sort of dream,

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[1] T., 371.
[2] T., 467.
[3] T., 398.
[4] T., 78.

and this intuition imposes on you the duty of making an effort to get out of it. However, who wants you to realise the Self if you don't want to? If you prefer to be in this dream, stay as you are.[1]

Sometimes, however, as in the following very similar conversation, the seeker was reminded that even the effort is a part of the illusion of individual being.

D.: It is said that our waking life is also a dream, similar to our dream during sleep. But in our dreams we make no conscious effort to get rid of the dream and to wake up; the dream itself comes to an end without any effort on our part and we become awake. Similarly, why shouldn't the waking state, which in reality is only another sort of dream, come to an end of its own accord without any effort on our part, and land us in Realisation or real awakening?

B.: Your thinking that you have to make an effort to get rid of this dream of a waking state and your making efforts to attain Realisation or real awakening are all parts of the dream. When you attain Realisation you will see there was neither the dream during sleep nor the waking state, but only yourself and your real state.[2]

Sometimes the question took the form of apparent conflict not between effort and destiny but between effort and grace, for there were those who asked what use effort was if Realisation was dependent on the grace of God or Guru. In one form or another this doubt tends to arise in any religion, as in the Christian dispute whether salvation is due to grace or good works. Really, as the following quotations show, there is no conflict between the two.

V.: It is said that only those who are chosen for Self-realisation obtain it. That is rather discouraging.

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[1] D. D., pp. 89-90.
[2] D. D., p. 16.

B.: That only means that we cannot attain realisation of the Self by our own mind, unaided by God's grace.

I interposed: "Bhagavan also says that even that grace does not come arbitrarily but because one has deserved it by one's own efforts either in this life or in previous ones."

V.: But human effort is said to be useless; so what incentive has a man to improve himself?

I asked where it was said that you should make no effort or that effort was useless; and the visitor pointed to the passage in 'Who am I?' where it says that, since the indefinable power of the Lord ordains, sustains and controls everything we need not worry what we shall do.[1]

I pointed out that what is deprecated there is not human effort but the feeling 'I-am-the-doer'. I asked Bhagavan whether my explanation was not right and he approved of it.[2]

D.: Grace is necessary for the removal of ignorance.

B.: Certainly. But Grace is there all along. Grace is the Self. It is not something to be acquired. All that is necessary is to know its existence. In the same way, the sun is pure brightness; it does not know darkness, although others speak of darkness fleeing away on its approach. Like darkness, ignorance is a phantom, not real. Because of its unreality, it is said to be removed when its unreality is discovered.

The sun is there and shines and you are surrounded by sunlight; still, if you would know the sun you must turn your eyes in its direction and look at it. Similarly, Grace is only to be found by effort, although it is here and now.

D.: By the desire to surrender, increasing grace is experienced, I hope?

[1&2] D. D., p. 4.

B.: Surrender once and for all and be done with the desire. So long as the sense of being the doer remains, desire does also. Therefore the ego remains. But once this goes the Self shines forth in its purity. The sense of being the doer is the bondage, not the actions themselves. 'Be still and know that I am God.' Here, stillness is total surrender without a vestige of individuality. Stillness will prevail and there will be no agitation of the mind. Agitation of mind is the cause of desire, of the sense of being the doer, of personality. If that is stopped, there is quiet. In this sense, 'knowing' means 'being'. It is not relative knowledge involving the triads of knower, knowledge and known.[1]

D.: But one may not be quite sure of God's grace.

B.: If the unripe mind does not feel God's grace, it does not mean that this is absent, for that would imply that God is at times not gracious, that is to say, ceases to be God.

D.: Is that the same as the saying of Christ: According to thy faith be it done unto thee?

B.: Quite so.

D.: The *Upanishads* say, I am told, that he alone knows the Atman whom the Atman chooses. Why should the Atman choose at all? If it chooses, why some particular person?

B.: When the sun rises some buds blossom, not all. Do you blame the sun for that? Nor can the bud blossom of itself; it requires the sunlight to enable it to do so.

D.: May we not say that the help of the Atman is needed because it is the Atman that drew over itself the veil of Maya?

B.: You may say so.

D.: If the Atman has drawn the veil over itself, should it not itself remove the veil?

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[1] T., 354.

B.: It will. But who complains of being veiled? Ask yourself that.

D.: Why should I? Let the Atman itself remove the veil.

B.: If the Atman complains about the veil, then the Atman will remove it.[1]

D.: If the Supreme Being is omnipresent, as He is said to be, His realisation ought to be an easy thing. The scriptures, however, declare that without His grace the Lord cannot even be worshipped, much less realised. So then, how can the individual by his own effort realise the Self, or the Supreme Being, except through His grace?

B.: There was never a time when the Supreme Being was unknown or unrealised, because He is one and identical with the Self. His grace or *anugraha* is the same as the conscious immediacy of His Divine Presence, *Prasannata*, in other words, Enlightenment or Revelation. One's ignorance of this self-revealing immediacy of Divine Grace is no proof to the contrary. If the owl does not see the sun that illumines the whole world, is that the fault of the sun? Is it not due to the defectiveness of the bird's sight? Similarly, if the ignorant man is unaware of the ever-luminous Atman or Self, can that be attributed to the nature of the Atman itself? Is it not the result of his own ignorance? The Supreme Lord is eternal grace. Therefore, there is really no such individual act as bestowing Grace; and, being ever present, the manifestation of Grace is not confined to any particular period or occasion.[2]

Turning to God and desiring His grace is itself grace.

D.: Doubts keep arising. That is why I ask how it is to be done.

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[1] M. G., pp. 43-4.
[2] S. I., Chap. II. § 7.

B.: A doubt arises and it is cleared. Another arises and that is cleared, only to make way for another, and so it goes on. So there is no possibility of clearing away all doubts. Find out instead to whom the doubts come. Go to their source and stay there. Then they cease to arise. That is how doubts are to be cleared away.

D.: Only grace can help me do it.

B.: Grace is not something outside you. In fact your very desire for grace is due to grace that is already working in you.[1]

Grace is represented alike as the grace of God or Guru.

D.: Isn't success dependent on the grace of the Guru?

B.: Yes, but isn't your practice itself due to such grace? Its fruits spring from it automatically. There is a stanza in *Kaivalya* which runs: 'O Guru, you have always been with me, watching over me, one incarnation after another, and have shaped my course until I was Liberated.' The Self manifests externally as the Guru when occasion demands; otherwise he always remains within, doing what is required.[2]

V.: In actual practice, I find I cannot succeed in my efforts unless Bhagavan's grace descends on me.

B.: The Guru's Grace is always there. You imagine it to be something somewhere high up in the sky that has to descend, but really it is inside you, in your heart, and the moment you effect the subsidence or merging of the mind into its Source, by whatever method, the Grace rushes forth, spouting as from a spring within you.[3]

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[1] T., 618.
[2] T., 425.
[3] D. D., p. 28.

CHAPTER THREE

LIFE IN THE WORLD

Once anyone decided to proceed from theory to practice on the basis of Bhagavan's teachings, the question was apt to arise how that affected his life in the world. Hinduism does not necessarily enjoin physical renunciation for active spiritual seekers, as did, for instance, the original teaching of Christ or Buddha. On the contrary, the state of the householder is honoured and the path of right action is a legitimate path. In fact, the classical system in ancient India was that a man should retire into the homeless state only after he had fulfilled his duties as a householder and had an adult son or sons to replace him.

However, the doctrine of non-duality, together with the path of Self-enquiry (to be described in a later chapter), which is based on it, has been traditionally recognised as suitable to the world-renouncer. It was therefore natural that Bhagavan's followers often asked him whether they should renounce the world. At the same time, it was a remarkable indication of the amount of spiritual determination which still remains in modern India, for renouncing the world does not mean living a solitary life in a little house and garden of one's own, as it might in the West, or even retiring to the austere security of a monastery, but going forth homeless and penniless, depending on the charitable for food and clothing and sleeping in a cave or temple or wherever possible. It does sometimes happen in modern times that a sadhu accepts a small grant from his family – enough to buy food and the simplest clothing; but even so, it is a bare, hard life. Nevertheless, there were constant requests to be allowed to take this life and constantly Bhagavan withheld permission. The work was internal and had to be done in the mind, whatever the conditions of life.

B.: Why do you think you are a householder? The similar thought that you are a sannyasi will haunt you even if you go forth as one. Whether you continue in the household or renounce it and go to live in the forest, your mind haunts you. The ego is the source of thought. It creates the body and the world and makes you think of being a householder. If you renounce, it will only substitute the thought of renunciation for that of the family and the environment of the forest for that of the household. But the mental obstacles are always there for you. They even increase greatly in the new surroundings. Change of environment is no help. The one obstacle is the mind, and this must be overcome whether in the home or in the forest. If you can do it in the forest why not in the home? So why change the environment? Your efforts can be made even now, whatever be the environment.

D.: Is it possible to enjoy *samadhi* while busy with worldly work?

B.: It is the feeling 'I work' that is the hindrance. Ask yourself: 'Who works?' Remember who you are. Then the work will not bind you. It will go on automatically. Make no effort either to work or to renounce; your effort is the bondage. What is destined to happen will happen. If you are destined to work, you will not be able to avoid it; you will be forced to engage in it. So leave it to the Higher Power. It is not really your choice whether you renounce or retain.[1]

When women carrying jars of water on their heads, stop to talk, they are very careful, keeping their mind on the water jars. Similarly, when a sage engages in activity, his mind remains fixed in the Self and his activity does not distract him.[2]

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[1] M. G., p. 4-5.
[2] T., 231.

D.: I believe celibacy is necessary even for a householder if he is to succeed in Self-enquiry. Am I right?

B.: First find out who the wife and husband are. Then the question will not arise.[1]

D.: Isn't Brahmacharya (celibacy) necessary for realisation of the Self?

B.: Brahmacharya means 'living in Brahman'; it has no connection with celibacy as commonly understood. A real Brahmachari is one who lives in Brahman and finds bliss in Brahman, which is the same as the Self. Why, then, should he look for other sources of happiness? In fact, it is emergence from the Self that is the cause of all misery.

D.: But isn't celibacy necessary for yoga?

B.: It is one aid to realisation among many others.

D.: Then is it not indispensable? Can a married man realise the Self?

B.: Certainly. It is a question of fitness of mind. Married or unmarried, a man can realise the Self, because the Self is here and now. If it were not, but were obtainable by some effort at some future time, if it were something new to be acquired, it would not be worth seeking, because what is not natural cannot be permanent. What I say is that the Self is here and now and that IT alone is.[2]

D.: Is it necessary to take sannyasa (a vow of renunciation) in order to attain Self-realisation?

B.: 'Sannyasa' means renouncing one's individuality, not shaving one's head and putting on ochre robes. A man may be a householder but if he does not think he is one he is a sannyasin. On the other hand, he may wear ochre robes and wander about, but so long as he thinks he is a sannyasin he is not one. To think about one's renunciation defeats the purpose of renouncing.[3]

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[1] T., 484.
[2] T., 17.
[3] T., 427.

What do you mean by 'taking sannyasa'? Do you think it means leaving your home or wearing robes of a certain colour? Wherever you go, even if you fly up into the air, will your mind not go with you? Or, can you leave it behind you and go without it?[1]

Why should your occupation or duties in life interfere with your spiritual effort? For instance, there is a difference between your activities at home and in the office. In your office activities, you are detached and so long as you do your duty you do not care what happens or whether it results in gain or loss to the employer. Your duties at home, on the other hand, are performed with attachment and you are all the time anxious whether they will bring advantage to you and your family. But it is possible to perform all the activities of life with detachment and regard only the Self as real. It is wrong to suppose that if one is fixed in the Self, one's duties in life will not be properly performed. It is like an actor. He dresses and acts and even feels the part he is playing, but he knows really that he is not that character but someone else in real life. In the same way, why should the body consciousness or the feeling 'I-am-the-body' disturb you, once you know for certain that you are not the body but the Self? Nothing that the body does should shake you from abidance in the Self. Such abidance will never interfere with the proper and effective discharge of whatever duties the body has any more than an actor's being aware of his real status in life interferes with his acting a part on the stage.[2]

D.: It has been definitely stated that so long as there is the least trace of the 'I-am-the-doer' idea, there can be no realisation,

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[1] D. D., p. 232.
[2] D. D., pp. 244-5.

but is it possible for a householder who earnestly desires Liberation to fulfil his duties without this idea?

B.: There is no principle that actions can be performed only on the basis of the 'I-am-the-doer' idea, and therefore there is no reason to ask whether they can be performed and the duties discharged without that idea. To take a common example, an accountant working all day in his office and scrupulously attending to his duties might seem to the spectator to be shouldering all the financial responsibilities of the institution. But, knowing that he is not personally affected by the intake or outgoings, he remains unattached and free from the 'I-am-the-doer' feeling in doing his work, while at the same time he does it perfectly well. In the same way, it is quite possible for the wise householder who earnestly seeks liberation to discharge his duties in life (which, after all, are his destiny) without any attachment, regarding himself merely as an instrument for the purpose. Such activity is not an obstacle on the path of Knowledge nor does Knowledge prevent a man from discharging his duties in life. Knowledge and activity are never mutually antagonistic and the realisation of one does not impede performance of the other, nor performance of one the realisation of the other.

D.: What is the significance of the life of a spiritually-minded householder who has to devote all his time merely to earning a living and supporting his family and what mutual benefit do they get?

B.: The discharge of his duties by a householder such as this, who works for the support of his family, quite unmindful of his own physical comforts in life, should be regarded as selfless service rendered to his family, whose needs it is his destiny to meet. It may, however, be asked what benefit such a householder derives from the family. The answer is that there is no benefit

for him from the family as such, since he has made the discharge of his duties to them a means of spiritual training and since he finally obtains perfect contentment by realising the supreme Bliss of Liberation, which is the ultimate goal of every path and the supreme reward. He therefore stands in need of nothing from the members of his family or from his family life.

D.: How can a householder who is constantly engaged in the active discharge of his domestic duties, which should naturally impel him to still greater activity, obtain the supreme peace of withdrawal and freedom from the urge to such activity even while thus busily engaged?

B.: It is only to the spectator that the enlightened householder seems to be occupied with his domestic duties; for even though apparently engaged in domestic duties, he is not really engaged in any activity at all. His outer activity does not prevent him from realising the perfect peace of withdrawal, and he is free from the restless urge to activity even in the midst of his activities.[1]

Visitor: Should I retire from business and take to reading books on Vedanta?

B.: If objects have an independent existence, that is if they exist somewhere apart from you, then it may be possible for you to retire from them. But they do not. They owe their existence to you, to your thought, so where can you retire from them? As for reading books on Vedanta, you can go on reading any number but they can only tell you to realise the Self within you. The Self cannot be found in books. You have to find it for yourself, in yourself.[2]

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[1] S. I., Chap. II, § 23, 24, 25.
[2] D. D., p. 1.

D.: Is a vow of silence useful?

B.: The inner silence is self-surrender. And that means living without the sense of ego.

D.: Is solitude necessary for a sannyasin?

B.: Solitude is in the mind of a man. One man may be in the thick of the world and yet maintain perfect serenity of mind. Such a person is always in solitude. Another may live in the forest but still be unable to control his mind. He cannot be said to be in solitude. Solitude is an attitude of the mind. A man attached to the things of life cannot get solitude, wherever he may be, whereas a detached man is always in solitude.[1]

> As this implies, Bhagavan did not approve of a vow of silence, such as people sometimes take in order to create a sort of solitude in society. The real silence, he taught, is a still mind. If the mind is active, there is no benefit in not speaking. What is needed is to control both thought and speech.

The silence of solitude is forced. Restrained speech in society is equivalent to silence, for then a man controls his speech. There must be a speaker before there can be speech. If the mind of the speaker is engaged otherwise, speech is restrained. When the mind is turned inwards it is active in a different way and is not anxious to speak. The purpose of a vow of silence is to limit the mental activities provoked by speech but if the mind is controlled, this is unnecessary and silence becomes natural.[2]

> Until the mind is ripe to do so, it is not even possible to give up activity.

D.: How does activity help? Doesn't it simply increase the already heavy load upon us that we have to get rid of?

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[1] M. G., p. 10.
[2] T., 60.

B.: Action performed unselfishly purifies the mind and helps it to fix itself in meditation.

D.: But suppose one were to meditate constantly without activity?

B.: Try and see. Your inherent tendencies will not let you. Meditation only comes step by step with their gradual weakening, by the grace of the Guru.[1]

> Even in the case of one who had fulfilled his destiny as a householder and, having grown-up children to take his place, could have renounced the world according to the classical Indian tradition, Bhagavan still did not give his sanction.

D.: I have no pleasure in my family. There remains nothing for me to do there. I have done what has to be done and now there are grandsons and granddaughters in the house. Should I remain there or should I leave it and go away?

B.: You should stay just where you are now. But where are you now? Are you in the house or is the house in you? Is there any house apart from you? If you become established in your own place, you will find that all things have merged into you and such questions will become unnecessary.

D.: Then it seems I am to remain at home?

B.: You are to remain in your true state.[2]

> Sometimes the Maharshi was asked why he himself renounced the world and went forth to the homeless life, if he did not approve of that path for his followers; and he replied merely that such was his destiny. It is to be remembered that the path he taught, the use of Self-enquiry in the life of the world, combined with harmonious action, is a new path created by him to meet the needs of our time. He himself had to be established in Realisation before he could establish the path thereto.

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[1] T., 80.

[2] T., 634.

D.: Can I engage in spiritual practice even while remaining in the life of the world?

B.: Yes, certainly; one ought to do so.

D.: Isn't life in the world a hindrance? Don't all the books advocate renunciation?

B.: The world is only in the mind. It does not speak out, saying: 'I am the world'. If it did, it would have to be always present even in your sleep. Since it is not present in sleep, it is impermanent. Being impermanent, it has no reality. Having no reality, it is easily subdued by the Self. The Self alone is permanent. Renunciation is non-identification of the Self with the non-self. On the disappearance of ignorance, the non-self ceases to exist. That is true renunciation.

D.: Why then did you leave your home in your youth?

B.: That was my *prarabdha* (destiny). One's course of conduct in this life is determined by one's *prarabdha*. My *prarabdha* lies this way; yours lies that way.

D.: Should I not also renounce?

B.: If that had been your *prarabdha*, the question would not have arisen.

D.: Then I take it that I should remain in the world and engage in spiritual practice. But if I do so, can I obtain realisation in this life?

B.: This has already been answered. You are always the Self. Earnest efforts never fail. Success is bound to result.[1]

> With many European and some Indian visitors, it was the opposite question that arose – not whether they should renounce the world but what they could do to help it. Being 'in the world but not of it', following the inner spiritual quest while outwardly conforming to the conditions of life, seemed to them too much of a withdrawal, not too little. To some

[1] T., 251.

extent, Bhagavan's answers varied according to the understanding of the questioner. If the latter was capable of spiritual understanding he would turn him inwards.

D.: Why is the world enveloped in ignorance?

B.: Look after yourself and let the world look after itself. What is your Self? If you are the body there is a physical world also, but if you are the Spirit, there is only Spirit.[1]

Visitor: What do you think about social reform?

B.: Self-reform automatically results in social reform. Attend to self-reform and social reform will take care of itself.[2]

However, people who raised this sort of objection were more often of a devotional temperament, such as requires worship and a dualistic religion; and in such cases, Bhagavan would enjoin submission to God. All that is required is to submit to God and do one's duty, play one's part in life, with full confidence. That is all that is asked of one. One is not responsible for the outcome.

B.: Now, I will ask you a question. When a man gets into a train, where does he put his luggage?

D.: Either in the compartment or in the luggage van.

B.: He doesn't carry it on his head or in his lap while in the train?

D.: Only a fool would do so.

B.: It is a thousand times more foolish to bear your own burden once you have undertaken the spiritual quest, whether by the path of knowledge or devotion.

D.: But can I relinquish all my responsibilities, all my commitments?

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[1] T., 363.
[2] T., 282.

B.: You remember the temple tower? There are many statues on it, aren't there? Well, there are four big ones at the base, one at each corner. Have you seen them?

D.: Yes.

B.: Well, I tell you that the huge tower is supported by these four statues.

D.: How is that possible? What does Bhagavan mean?

B.: I mean that to say that is no more foolish than saying that you bear all the cares, burdens and responsibilities of life. The Lord of the universe bears the whole burden. You only imagine that you do. You can hand over all your burdens to Him. Whatever you have to do, you will be made an instrument for doing it at the right time. Do not imagine that you cannot do it unless you have the desire to. It is not desire that gives you the necessary strength. The strength is the Lord's.[1]

Sometimes there was a more pressing anxiety about the state of the world and a desire to assume responsibility.

D.: Will Bhagavan give his opinion on the future of the world, as we are living in critical times?

B.: Why should you worry about the future? You don't even know the present properly. Take care of the present and the future will take care of itself.

D.: Will the world soon enter a new era of friendliness and mutual help or will it go down in chaos and war?

B.: There is One who governs the world and it is His task to look after it. He who has given life to the world knows how to look after it also. He bears the burden of this world, not you.

D.: Yet, if one looks round with unprejudiced eyes, it is hard to see where this benevolent care comes in.

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[1] S. D. B., p. xxvi, xxvii.

B.: As you are, so is the world. Without understanding yourself, what is the use of trying to understand the world? This is a question that seekers after Truth need not worry about. People waste their energy over all such questions. First find out the Truth behind yourself, then you will be in a better position to understand the Truth behind the world of which you are a part.[1]

Another visitor asked Bhagavan for a benedictory foreword to a book he had written, called *The Destiny of the Freedom* or something of that sort. He said that someone else had already agreed to write an introduction but he would be grateful if Bhagavan would write a few words conveying his message and blessing. Bhagavan explained to him that he had never done such a thing and therefore should not be expected to now. The visitor persisted, and I went to some trouble to convince him that all his persuasion would be in vain. Then he began saying that the world badly needs a spiritual message and that the youth of India and of the world are not properly brought up, since religion is not instilled into them, and so forth. I had to tell him that Bhagavan holds that before a man tries to reform the world he should first know himself, and then he can go about reforming the world if he still feels so inclined. I believe the visitor was for continuing the argument, but fortunately it was time for the *Parayanam* (recital of the Vedas) and he was effectively stopped thereby.[2]

D.: Should I try to help the suffering world?

B.: The Power that created you created the world as well. If God created the world it is His business to look after it, not yours.[3]

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[1] R. M., p. 184-5.
[2] D. D., p. 232.
[3] M. G., pp. 24-5.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that Bhagavan's teaching condoned coldness or callousness to human suffering. Those who were in distress had to be helped; only they had to be helped in a spirit of humanity. What was forbidden was only the self-importance inherent in trying to act the part of providence. This is made very clear in the following passage:

D.: But we see pain in the world. A man is hungry. It is a physical reality. It is very real to him. Are we to call it a dream and remain unmoved by his suffering?

B.: From the point of view of *jnana* or Reality, the suffering you speak of is certainly a dream, as is the world of which that suffering is an infinitesimal part. In a dream you have when you are asleep you yourself feel hunger and see others also suffering from hunger. You feed yourself and, moved by pity, feed the others who are hungry. So long as the dream lasted, all this suffering was quite as real as the suffering you see in the world is to you now. It was only when you woke up that you discovered it to be unreal. You might have eaten heartily before going to sleep, but you still dreamt that you had been working hard in the hot sun all day and were tired and hungry. Then you woke up and found that your stomach was full and that you had not stirred from your bed. But all this is not to say that while you are in the dream you can act as if the suffering you feel in it is not real. The hunger in the dream has to be appeased by dream food. The fellow beings you find hungry in the dream have to be provided with dream food. You can never mix the two states, the dream and the waking state. Similarly, till you attain the state of Realisation and thus wake out of this illusory, phenomenal world, you must do social service by relieving suffering whenever you see it. But even so you must do it without *ahankara* that is without the sense of: 'It-is-I-who-am-doing-it'. Instead you should feel: 'I am the Lord's instrument.' Similarly

you must not be conceited and think: 'I am helping a man who is below me. He needs help and I am in a position to give it. I am superior and he is inferior'. You must help him as a means of worshipping God in him. All such service is serving the Self, not anybody else. You are not helping anybody else, but only yourself.[1]

In general, Bhagavan discouraged political activity among those dedicated to the quest.

D.: Is it not our duty to be patriots?

B.: It is your duty to BE and not to be this or that, 'I am that I am' sums up the whole of the Truth. The method is summarised in 'Be still.'[2]

However, when people who were engaged in political life approached him, he would simply advise them to carry on in a spirit of service and surrender, seeking to eliminate all egoism from their work.

D.: Is the desire for *swaraj* (independence) right?

B.: Such desire no doubt begins with self-interest. Yet practical work for the goal gradually widens the outlook so that the individual becomes merged in the country. Such merging of the individuality is desirable and the karma in question is *nishkama* (unselfish).

D.: If self-government for India is granted after a long struggle and terrible sacrifice, is one not justified in being pleased with the result and elated by it?

B.: In the course of one's work one must have surrendered oneself to the higher Power whose might must be kept in mind and never lost sight of. How then can one be elated? One should

[1] D. D., p. 94.
[2] M. G., p. 25.

not even care for the result of one's action. Then alone the karma becomes unselfish.[1]

Gandhiji has surrendered himself to the Divine and works accordingly with no self interest. He does not concern himself with the results but accepts them as they turn up. That must be the attitude of national workers.

Q.: Will the work be crowned with success?

B.: This question arises because the questioner has not surrendered himself.

Q.: Should we then not think of and work for the welfare of the country?

B.: First take care of yourself and the rest will naturally follow.

Q.: I am not speaking individually but for the country.

B.: First surrender and then see. Doubts arise because of the absence of surrender. Acquire strength by surrender and then your surrounding will be found to have improved to the degree of strength acquired by you.[2]

> Persons whose temperament drew them to activity and who found it hard to understand that spiritually there are no others, queried whether there was not some egoism in seeking their own realisation, not understanding that the very expression 'their own' did not apply and that not merely egoism but the ego itself had to be renounced. Bhagavan himself was asked why he did not go about preaching to the people.

D.: Why doesn't Sri Bhagavan go about preaching the truth to the people at large?

B.: How do you know that I don't? Does preaching consist in mounting a platform and haranguing the people around?

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[1] T., 502.
[2] T., 521.

Preaching is simple communication of knowledge and can be done in silence too. What do you think of a man listening to a harangue for an hour and going away without being impressed by it so as to change his life? Compare him with another who sits in a holy presence and leaves after some time with his outlook on life totally changed. Which is better: to preach loudly without effect or to sit silently sending forth intuitive force to act on others? Again, how does speech arise? First, there is abstract knowledge (unmanifest). From this there arises the ego which gives rise to thoughts and words successively. So then:

Abstract Knowledge
↓
Ego
↓
Thoughts
↓
Words

Words therefore are the great-grandsons of the original source. If words can produce an effect, consider how much more powerful preaching through silence must be.[1]

> Bhagavan answered those who doubted its utility that Realisation was the greatest help they could possibly render to others. Indeed, Bhagavan himself was the standing proof of this, as one saw from the numbers of people helped to the very depth of their being, lifted out of confusion and sorrow on to a firm path of peace and understanding, by the silent influence of his grace. And yet, at the same time, he reminded them that, from the point of view of knowledge, there are no others to help.

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[1] T., 285.

D.: Does my Realisation help others?

B.: Yes, certainly. It is the best possible help. But really there are no others to help, for a Realised Being sees only the Self just as a goldsmith estimating the gold in various jewels sees only the gold. Separate forms and beings exist only as long as you identify yourself with the body. When you transcend the body, others disappear along with your body-consciousness.

D.: Is it so with plants and trees also?

B.: Do they exist at all apart from the Self? Find out. You think that you see them. The thought is projected from yourself. Find out wherefrom it arises. Then thoughts will cease to rise and the Self alone will remain.

D.: I understand theoretically, but they are still there.

B.: Yes, it is like a cinema show. There is the light on the screen and the shadows flitting across impress the audience as the acting of some story. Now suppose that in this film story an audience is also shown on the screen. The seer and the seen will then both be on the screen. Apply this to yourself. You are the screen, the Self has created the ego, the ego has its accretions of thoughts, which are displayed as the world, trees, plants, etc., about which you are asking. In reality all these are nothing but the Self. If you see the Self it will be found to be all, everywhere and always. Nothing but the Self exists.[1]

The same was explained to Mr. Evans-Wentz, the well-known writer about Tibet.

E.W.: They say that there are many saints in Tibet who remain in solitude and are still very helpful to the world. How can that be?

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[1] T., 13

B.: It can be so. Realisation of the Self is the greatest help that can be rendered to humanity. Therefore saints are said to be helpful even though they remain in the forests. But it should not be forgotten that solitude is not to be found in forests only. It can be had even in town in the thick of worldly occupation.

E.W.: Isn't it necessary that saints should mix with people and be helpful to them?

B.: The Self alone is the Reality; the world and the rest of it are not. The Realised Being does not see the world as different from himself.

E.W.: Then does that mean that a man's Realisation leads to the uplift of mankind without their being aware of it?

B.: Yes; the help is imperceptible but it is still there. A Realised Man helps the whole of mankind, although without their knowledge.

E.W.: Wouldn't it be better if he mixed with others?

B.: There are no others to mix with. The Self is the one and only Reality.

E.W.: If there were a hundred Self-realised men, wouldn't it be to the greater benefit of the world?

B.: When you say 'Self' you refer to the unlimited, but when you add 'men' to it, you limit the meaning. There is only one Infinite Self.

E.W.: Yes, I see. Sri Krishna said in the *Gita*, that work must be performed without attachment and such work is better than idleness. Is that Karma Yoga?

B.: What is said is adapted to the temperament of the listener.

E.W.: In Europe people do not understand that a man can be helpful in solitude. They imagine that only men who work in the world can be useful. When will this confusion cease?

Will the European mind continue wading in the morass or will it realise the Truth?

B.: Never mind about Europe or America. Where are they but in the mind? Realise your Self and then all is realised. If you see a number of men in a dream and then wake up and recall your dream, do you try to find out whether the persons of your dream-creation are also awake?[1]

A self-realised being cannot help benefitting the world. His very existence is the highest good.[2]

[1] T., 20.
[2] T., 210.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE GURU

It has always been taught that in order to attain Realisation, not only practice but also a guide is needed. In this, as in all things, Bhagavan gave the doctrine its deepest meaning. In fact, it became essentially the same as the Christian doctrine of 'the Christ in you' or the Buddhist doctrine of the 'Buddha-mind' which is to be realised in oneself.

D.: Bhagavan has said that without the grace of the Guru one cannot attain the Self. What precisely does he mean by this? What is this Guru?

B.: From the standpoint of the path of knowledge, it is the supreme state of the Self. It is different from the ego which you call yourself.

D.: Then, if it is the supreme state of my own self, in what sense does Bhagavan mean that I cannot reach it without the grace of the Guru?

B.: The ego is the individuality and is not the same as the Lord of all. When it approaches the Lord with sincere devotion, He graciously assumes name and form and takes it to Himself. Therefore they say that the Guru is none other than the Lord. He is the human embodiment of Divine Grace.

This would seem to mean, then, that the Guru is the Lord or the Self manifested outwardly in human form and that this outward manifestation is necessary. But the questioner, in the present instance, was not convinced of this, since he knew that Bhagavan himself had had no human Guru and that there are other cases on record also, especially among the founders of religions. He therefore continued:

D.: But there are some who seem to have had no human Guru at all?

B.: True. In the case of certain great souls, God reveals Himself as the Light of the Light from within.[1]

> It occasionally happened that some questioner would openly raise the objection that Bhagavan himself had not a Guru and in such cases, his reply would be that the Guru need not necessarily take human form.

Some who knew his teaching at second hand suggested that he did not hold it necessary to have a Guru and explained the lack of explicit initiation in that way, but he rejected this suggestion unequivocally. S.S. Cohen has recorded a conversation on this subject with Dilip Kumar Roy, the celebrated musician of Sri Aurobindo Ashram:

Dilip.: Some people report Maharshi to deny the need of a Guru. Others say the reverse. What does Maharshi say?

B.: I have never said that there is no need for a Guru.

Dilip: Sri Aurobindo often refers to you as having had no Guru.

B.: That depends on what you call Guru. He need not necessarily be in human form. Dattatreya had twenty-four Gurus – the elements, and so on. That means that any form in the world was his Guru. Guru is absolutely necessary. The Upanishads say that none but a Guru can take a man out of the jungle of mental and sense perceptions, so there must be a Guru.

Dilip: I mean a human Guru. The Maharshi didn't have one.

B.: I might have had at some time or other. And didn't I sing hymns to Arunachala? What is a Guru? Guru is God or the Self. First a man prays to God to fulfil his desires, then a time comes

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[1] S. D. B. v, vi.

when he does not pray for the fulfilment of a desire, but for God Himself. So God appears to him in some form or other, human or non-human, to guide him as a Guru in answer to his prayer.

It was only when some visitor brought up the subject that Sri Bhagavan himself had not had a Guru that he explained that the Guru need not necessarily take on a human form, and it was understood that this referred to very rare cases.[1]

> I shall return to this question later, but wish immediately to consider the implication of the saying that God, Guru and Self are the same. In the ordinary sense of the word, a Guru is one who has been invested with the right to initiate disciples and prescribe a spiritual discipline for them; and in this sense, a proper investiture is necessary to validate his actions as a Guru, just as proper ordination is necessary to validate the religious rites performed by a priest. A mass said by a duly ordained priest would be valid, whereas one said by a man of greater moral integrity and intellectual power who was not an ordained priest, would not; and in exactly the same way, the genuineness of a Guru and validity of his initiation and discipline is normally dependent rather on his legitimate investiture as the successor to a line of Gurus than on his own inherent attainments. Bhagavan was little interested in this interpretation of the word Guru, but he did accept it when asked.

D.: Can one derive any benefit from repeating incantations picked up casually, without being initiated into them?

B.: No. One must be initiated into them and authorised to use them.

Bhagavan then illustrated this saying by the following story: A king once visited his minister at the latter's house. There he was told that the minister was busy with his incantations. The

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[1] R. M., p. 169-70.

king accordingly waited for him, and when he was free to meet him, asked him what incantation it was. The minister told him that it was the *Gayatri*. The king then asked the minister to initiate him into the use of it, but the latter declared that he was unable to. Thereupon the king learnt it from someone else and the next time he met the minister he repeated it to him and asked him whether it was right. The minister replied that the incantation was right but that it was not right for him to say it. The king asked why; the minister called an attendant who was standing nearby and told him to arrest the king. The order was not obeyed. The minister repeated it and still it was not obeyed. The king then flew into a temper and ordered the attendant to arrest the minister, which he immediately did. The minister laughed and said that that was the explanation the king had asked for.

'How?' the king asked.

'Because the order was the same, and the executive was the same but the authority was different. When I pronounced the order there was no effect; but when you did it, the effect was immediate. It is the same with incantation.'[1]

> Normally, however, when Bhagavan said 'Guru' he meant something far greater than this, something different not in degree but in kind; he meant Sat-Guru, or Guru-deva, and that too in its highest meaning as nothing less than one who has realised his identity with the Self and abides therein constantly.

D.: What are the distinctive characteristics of a Guru by which one can recognise him?

B.: The Guru is one who at all times abides in the profound depths of the Self. He never sees any difference between himself

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[1] T., 8.

and others and is quite free from the idea that he is the Enlightened or the Liberated One, while those around him are in bondage or the darkness of ignorance. His self-possession can never be shaken under any circumstances and he is never perturbed.

D.: What is the essential nature of *upadesa* or spiritual instruction given by the Guru?

B.: The word *upadesa* literally means 'restoring an object to its proper place'. The mind of the disciple, having become differentiated from its true and primal state of Pure Being, which is the Self and which is described in the scriptures as *Sat-chit-ananda* (Being-Consciousness-Bliss), slips away therefrom and, assuming the form of thought, constantly pursues objects of sense-gratification. Therefore it is assailed by the vicissitudes of life and becomes weak and dispirited. *Upadesa* consists in the Guru restoring it to its primal state and preventing it from slipping away from the state of Pure Being, of absolute identity with the Self or, in other words, the Being of the Guru.

The word can also be understood as meaning 'to present an apparently distant object to close view'; that is to say, it consists in the Guru showing the disciple what he had considered as distant and different from himself to be immediate and identical with himself.

D.: If, as this implies, the real being of the Guru is identical with that of the disciple, why have the scriptures categorically declared that, however great powers one may attain, he cannot attain Self-realisation without the grace of the Guru?

B.: It is true that the being of the Guru is identical with that of the disciple; however, it is very seldom that a person can realise his true Being without the grace of the Guru.[1]

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[1] S. I., Chap. I, § 1-4.

It is not really the bodily individual that is the Guru.

B.: What is your idea of a Guru? You think of him in human shape as a body of certain dimensions, complexion, and so on. A disciple, after Realisation once said to his Guru: 'I now realise that you dwelt in my innermost heart as the one Reality in all my countless births and have now come before me is human shape and lifted this veil of ignorance. What can I do for you in return for such a great benefit?' And the Guru replied: 'You need not do anything. It is enough if you remain as you are in your true state. That is the truth about the Guru.[1]

Bhagavan often explained that the Divine Guide, the true Guru, is in one's heart as well as being manifested outwardly. While the outward Guru turns one's mind inwards, the inner Guru pulls from within. Even one's environment does not happen by accident. The Guru creates the conditions necessary for one's quest.

D.: What is the Grace of the Guru?

B.: The Guru is the Self. At some time a man grows dissatisfied with his life and, not content with what he has, seeks the satisfaction of his desires through prayer to God. His mind is gradually purified until he longs to know God, more to obtain His Grace than to satisfy worldly desires. Then God's grace begins to manifest. God takes the form of a Guru and appears to the devotee, teaches him the Truth and, moreover, purifies his mind by association with him. The devotee's mind thus gains strength and is then able to turn inward. By meditation it is further purified until it remains calm without the least ripple. That calm Expanse is the Self.

The Guru is both outer and inner. From outside he gives a push to the mind to turn inward while from inside he pulls

[1] D. D., p. 88.

the mind towards the Self and helps in quieting it. That is the Grace of the Guru. There is no difference between God, Guru and Self.

D.: In the Theosophical Society they meditate in order to seek masters to guide them.

B.: The master is within; meditation is meant to remove the ignorant idea that he is only external. If he were some stranger whom you awaited, he would be bound to disappear also. What would be the use of a transient being like that? But as long as you think you are separate or that you are the body, so long is the outer master also necessary and He will appear as if with a body. When the wrong identification of yourself with the body ceases, the master will be found to be none other than the Self.

D.: Will the Guru help us to know the Self through initiation, and so on?

B.: Does the Guru hold you by the hand and whisper in your ear? You may imagine him to be what you are yourself. Because you think you have a body, you think that he has also and that he will do something tangible to you. His work lies within, in the spiritual realm.

D.: How is the Guru found?

B.: God, who is immanent, in His Grace takes pity on the loving devotee and manifests Himself according to the devotee's development. The devotee thinks that he is a man and expects a relationship as between two physical bodies. But the Guru who is God or the Self incarnate, works from within, helps the man to see his mistakes and guides him in the right path until he realises the Self within.

D.: What should the devotee do then?

B.: He has only to act according to the words of the master and work inwardly. The master is both 'within' and 'without',

so he creates conditions to drive you inward and at the same time prepares the 'interior' to drag you to the Centre. Thus he gives a push from 'without' and exerts a pull from 'within' so that you may be fixed at the Centre.

You think that the world can be conquered by your own efforts. When you are frustrated externally and are driven inwards you feel, 'Oh, there is a power higher than man.' The ego is a very powerful elephant which cannot be brought under control by any creature less powerful than a lion, which, in this instance, is none other than the Guru, whose very looks make the elephant-like ego tremble and die. You will know in due course that your glory lies where you cease to exist. In order to gain that state, you should surrender yourself. Then the master sees that you are in a fit state to receive guidance and He guides you.[1]

> What is the significance of saying that the Guru is the manifestation of God or Self? Bhagavan spoke always from the point of view of non-duality, and from this point of view the disciple is also guided thus. The only difference is that the Guru has realised it and the disciple has not.

B.: So long as you seek Self-realisation, the Guru is necessary. Guru is the Self. Take Guru to be the real Self, and yourself to be the individual self. The disappearance of this sense of duality is the removal of ignorance. So long as duality persists in you, the Guru is necessary. Because you identify yourself with the body, you think the Guru too is the body. You are not the body, nor is the Guru. You are the Self and so is the Guru. This knowledge is gained by what you call Self-realisation.[2]

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[1] M. G., pp. 26-7.
[2] T., 282.

You mistake the body for the Guru. But the Guru himself does not make that mistake. He is the formless Self. That is within you. He appears outwardly only to guide you.[1]

> A curious paradox arises with the perfect Guru, the Self-realised man in constant, conscious identity with the Self. For the very reason that he is the complete and perfect Guru he will not call himself a Guru or call any his disciples, since that would be an affirmation of relationship and therefore of duality.

Though he instructs his disciples, yet he does not call himself their Guru, realising as he does that Guru and disciple are mere conventions born of maya (total illusion).[2]

> And indeed, Bhagavan initiated his disciples through silence, or in a dream when at a distance, or by look when they were in his bodily presence; but he did not call them his disciples or give the formal initiation that postulates duality. He watched over them constantly, prescribed a discipline for them verbally or guided them to it by the power of his silent grace. But he did not call himself their Guru.

D.: Isn't grace the gift of the Guru?

B.: God, Grace and Guru are all synonymous and are both eternal and immanent. Isn't the Self already within? Is it for the Guru to bestow it by his look? If a Guru thinks so, he does not deserve that name. The books say there are many kinds of initiation. They also say that the Guru performs various rites with fire, water, incantations and so on, and call such fantastic performances initiation, as if the disciple became ripe only after such processes were gone through by the Guru.

If the individual is sought, he is nowhere to be found. Such is the Guru. Such is Dakshinamurthi. What did he do?

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[1] T., 499.
[2] T., 449.

He sat silent. The disciples appeared before him. He maintained silence, and their doubts were dispelled, which means they lost their individual identities. *Jnana* (spiritual knowledge) is that silent understanding and not the verbal definitions that are usually given for it. Silence is the most potent form of work. However vast and emphatic the scriptures may be, they fail in their effect. The Guru is quiet and peace prevails in all. His silence is vaster and more emphatic than all the scriptures put together. These questions arise because of the feeling that, in spite of having been here so long, heard so much, striven so hard, you have not gained anything. The process that goes on inside you is not apparent to you. In fact, the Guru is always within you.[1]

> Not all felt the grace, the power of silent initiation, immediately, but Bhagavan reassured them.

D.: It is said that one look of a Mahatma is enough; that idols, pilgrimages, and so on, are not so effective; but I have been here for three months and still do not know how I have been benefitted by the look of the Maharshi.

B.: The look has a purifying effect. Purification cannot be visualised. Just as a piece of coal takes a long time to ignite and a piece of charcoal a shorter time, while a heap of gunpowder is ignited instantaneously, so it is with different types of men coming in contact with a Mahatma.[2]

> Incidentally, the devotee who raised this question stayed on and became one of the staunchest and most devoted of all. Complete faith in the Guru was necessary but, as explained in the previous chapter, effort was also necessary.

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[1] T., 398.
[2] T., 155.

D.: After leaving this Asramam in October, I was aware of Bhagavan's peace enfolding me for about ten days. All the time, while busy with work, there was an undercurrent of that peace of unity; it was almost like the dual consciousness while half asleep in a dull lecture. Then it faded out entirely and the old stupidities came instead.

Work leaves no time for separate meditation. Is the constant reminder 'I am' and trying to feel this while actually at work enough?

B.: It will become constant when the mind is strengthened. Repeated practice strengthens the mind, and such a mind is capable of holding on to the current.

Then, whether you are engaged in work or not, the current remains unaffected and uninterrupted.[1]

> It often happened that the disciple saw no improvement in himself despite the effort, but he was told to have faith in the Guru. The process might not be visible to himself and improvement might be the greatest when least apparent.

He evoked no spectacular changes in the devotees, for such changes may be a superstructure without foundation and collapse later. Indeed, it sometimes happened that a devotee would grow despondent, seeing no improvement at all in himself and would complain that he was not progressing at all. In such cases Bhagavan might offer consolation or might retort, 'How do you know there is no progress?' And he would explain that it is the Guru, not the disciple, who sees the progress made; it is for the disciple to carry on perserveringly with his work even though the structure being raised may be out of sight of the mind.[2]

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[1] T., 310.
[2] R. M., p. 198.

> There were some who desired a definite statement that Bhagavan was a Guru, but this he would not make.

Mr. Evans-Wentz, the well-known writer on Tibetan Yoga, asked whether Bhagavan initiated disciples, but Bhagavan sat silent, giving no reply.

Then one of the devotees took it on himself to answer that the Maharshi does not regard any as being outside himself and therefore none can be disciples to him. His grace is all-pervading and is bestowed in silence on any deserving individual.[1]

> Bhagavan heard the explanation and did not reject it. Sometimes he would explain that the Guru-disciple relationship was necessary from the point of view of the disciple, since the latter viewed things from the stand-point of duality; and therefore the disciple could affirm that so-and-so was his Guru, although the Guru would not affirm that the other was his disciple.

D.: Bhagavan says he has no disciples?

B.: Yes.

D.: He also says that a Guru is necessary if one wishes to attain liberation.

B.: Yes.

D.: What then must I do? Has my sitting here all these years been just a waste of time? Must I go and look for some Guru in order to receive initiation, seeing that Bhagavan says he is not a Guru?

B.: What do you think brought you here such a long distance and made you remain here so long? Why do you doubt? If there had been any need to seek a Guru elsewhere, you would have gone away long ago. The Guru or *Jnani* (Enlightened

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[1] T., 23.

One) sees no difference between himself and others. For him all are *Jnanis*, all are one with himself, so how can a *Jnani* say that such-and-such is his disciple? But the unliberated one sees all as multiple, he sees all as different from himself, so to him the Guru-disciple relationship is a reality. For him there are three ways of initiation: by touch, look and silence. (*Sri Bhagavan here gave the disciple to understand that his way was by silence, as he has to many on other occasions.*)

D.: Then Bhagavan does have disciples?

B.: As I said, from Bhagavan's point of view there are no disciples, but from that of the disciple, the Grace of the Guru is like an ocean. If he comes with a cup he will get only a cupful. It is no use complaining of the niggardliness of the ocean; the bigger the vessel the more he will be able to carry. It is entirely up to him.[1]

> When the devotee pressed him once more for a confirmation, he turned to the attendant and said humorously, 'Let him get a document from the sub-registrar and take it to the office and get the office stamp on it.'
>
> In the following conversation, he implied clearly enough that he was to be regarded as the visible Guru.

D.: Can Sri Bhagavan help us to realise the Truth?

B.: Help is always there.

D.: Then, there is no need to ask questions. I do not feel the ever-present help.

B.: Surrender and you will find it.

D.: I am always at your feet. Will Bhagavan give me some *upadesa* to follow? Otherwise how can I get the help, living six hundred miles away?

B.: The Sad-Guru is within.

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[1] R. M., pp. 167-8.

D.: The Sad-Guru is necessary to guide me to understand that fact.

B.: The Sad-Guru is within you.

D.: I want a visible Guru.

B.: That visible Guru says that he is within.

It was in keeping with the purely spiritual nature of Bhagavan's initiation and guidance that he was averse to touching his disciples or being touched by them. In the further part of the talk just quoted the devotee requests:

D.: Will the Sad-Guru place his hand on my head to assure me of his help? Then I shall have the consolation of knowing that his promise will be fulfilled.

In such cases Bhagavan was apt either to remain silent or to turn it into a joke. On this occasion he took the latter course.

B.: Next you will be asking me for a bond and filing a suit if you imagine that the help is not forthcoming.[1]

It may be said by some readers of this book that this doctrine of God manifested as Guru was all right for those who had the good fortune to meet Bhagavan in his lifetime, but what of those who seek a Guru now? There are Gurus to be found, although the appearance on earth of a perfect Sad-Guru such as Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, a *Jivanmukta* living in constant conscious identity with the Self, is a very rare thing.

D.: How can one know whether a particular person is competent to be a Guru?

B.: By the peace of mind you feel in his presence and by the respect you feel for him.

D.: And if it turns out that he is not competent, what will be the fate of the disciple who has implicit faith in him?

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[1] T., 434.

B.: The fate of each one will be according to his merit.[1]

But if the Guru has not attained the Supreme State, can he be regarded as a manifestation of God or the Self? In a way, he can. The disciple himself is the Self, although ignorant of his true identity. The entire outer world manifests tendencies and possibilities in himself and among these the person who functions as Guru for him manifests the possibility of divine guidance, even without full awareness.

There is, however, another possibility also, and that is continued guidance by Bhagavan. It will be recalled that Bhagavan confirmed that the Guru need not necessarily take human form. He sometimes added that this happened only in rare cases. He himself had no human Guru. Just as, with Self-enquiry, he created a new path suitable to the conditions of the modern world, a path that can be followed without any outward forms, invisibly, while conforming to the outer conditions of modern life, so also he brought to men the possibility of silent, formless initiation, requiring no physical Guru. In his life-time initiation was by look or silence. He often confirmed that the truest *upadesa* or spiritual instruction was by silence.

The highest form of grace is silence. It is also the highest spiritual instruction... All other modes of instruction are derived from silence and are therefore secondary. Silence is the primary form. If the Guru is silent the seeker's mind gets purified by itself.[2]

The disciples of Bhagavan have found that the silent instruction continues as before. Others who have never met him in his lifetime have been drawn to him and begun to follow the guidance. If this seems strange to anyone, it means that he has not understood what Bhagavan was in his lifetime, that he identifies the Guru with the body. It is sometimes asked how a *Jivanmukta* continues to guide disciples after death, when

[1] T., 282.
[2] T., 518.

> he has merged in the Absolute, the Self of all. But the *Jivanmukta* is already consciously one with the Absolute, the Self of all, while still embodied. If this is not incompatible with initiation and guidance while he wears a body it is not afterwards. Death makes no difference to him, no change in his state. There is nothing more to be acquired, because he is that now; there is nothing to be lost, because he has already completely surrendered the ego.

P. Bannerjee asked Bhagavan what is the difference between *Jivanmukti* (Realisation while in the body) and *Videhamukti* (Realisation after death).

B.: There is no difference. For those who ask, it is said: A *Jnani* with a body is a *Jivanmukta* and he attains *Videhamukti* when he sheds the body. But this difference exists only for the onlooker, not for the *Jnani*. His state is the same before and after the body is dropped. We think of the *Jnani* as a human form or as being in that form; but he knows that he is the Self, the one reality which is both inside and out, and which is not bounded by any form or shape. There is a verse in the *Bhagavata* (here Bhagavan quoted the verse in Tamil) which says: Just as a man who is drunk is not conscious whether his upper cloth is on his body or has slipped away from it, the *Jnani* is hardly conscious of his body, and it makes no difference to him whether the body remains or has dropped off.[1]

> He did not encourage curiosity and seldom answered questions about the state of the *Jnani* or the Realised Man, but when asked whether the *Jnani* continues to perform a function after the death of the body, I have heard him reply briefly that in some cases he may. Also he himself confirmed what his disciples know now from experience, that the Guru may continue to give guidance after the death of the body, when no longer in human form.

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[1] D. D., p. 101.

Dr. Masalawala, retired Chief Medical Officer of Bhopal, who has been here for over a month and is in temporary charge of the Asramam hospital in the absence of Dr. K. Shiva Rao, put the following questions to Bhagavan and received the following answers:

D.: Bhagavan says: 'The influence of the *Jnani* steals into the devotee in silence'. Bhagavan also says: 'Contact with great men, exalted souls, is one efficacious means of realising one's true being.'

B.: Yes. What is the contradiction? *Jnani*, great men, exalted souls – does he differentiate between them?

Thereupon I said 'no'.

B.: Contact with them is good. They will work through silence. By speaking, their power is reduced. Speech is always less powerful than silence. So silent contact is the best.

D.: Does the contact continue even after the dissolution of the physical body of the *Jnani* or only so long as he is in flesh and blood?

B.: The Guru is not in the physical form. So contact will remain even after his physical form vanishes.[1]

> He declared that one who has obtained the grace of the Guru would never be abandoned.

He who has earned the grace of the Guru will undoubtedly be saved and never forsaken, just as the prey that has fallen into the tiger's jaw will never be allowed to escape.[2]

> Remembering this, perhaps, some devotees complained, when the death of his body was imminent, that he was abandoning them and asked what they could do without his continued guidance. He answered briefly:

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[1] D. D., pp. 168-9.
[2] W., § 20.

You attach too much importance to the body.[1]

The implication was clear. The Guru is the same whether he wears a body or not. And his devotees have since found it to be so.

Having dealt with the need to pass from theory to practice, the possibility of practising in the conditions of the modern world without any outward observances, and the necessity for a Guru, the next two chapters will deal with the forms of practice that Bhagavan prescribed. His prescribing them openly is in itself remarkable. In their public writings and utterances the spiritual masters of all religions have dealt mainly with theory and said little or nothing about the practical discipline they enjoined. The reason for this is obvious. It is that, as Bhagavan explains in the story of the king and his minister quoted earlier in this chapter, a technique of spiritual training can be legitimately used and be effective for good only when the use of it has been authorised by one duly qualified. And yet Bhagavan himself openly expounded the methods he enjoined, both in speech and writing. Most of the books on which the present exposition is based were written and published during his lifetime, and he always showed interest in them and often recommended a questioner to turn to one of them for his answer. Even when it became clear that the life of his body was approaching its end, he continued to show interest, in their editing and publication. Why did he permit this, when he was insistent that no technique is valid without the authorisation of the Guru? The only answer is the one given above. Physical death made no difference. If the *Mukta* can be a Guru before death, so can he also after death. He becomes no more a *Mukta* by dying. The path that had been made open by his Grace to those who turn to him was not for his lifetime only or for those few only who could approach him physically. He said:

They say that I am dying, but I am not going away. Where could I go? I am here.[2]

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1 & 2 R. M., p. 222.

CHAPTER FIVE

SELF-ENQUIRY

Although refraining, for the reason given in the previous chapter, from describing himself as a Guru, Sri Bhagavan did in fact constantly act as such. When any visitor came with questions, he would turn the trend of them from theory to practice; and in explaining and enjoining methods of spiritual training he was as forthcoming as he was reluctant to expound mere theory. He often said that the true teaching was in silence; but this did not mean that verbal expositions also were not given. They indicated to the seeker in what way he should make an effort, while the silent influence on his heart helped him to do so.

As will be shown in the next chapter, Sri Bhagavan authorised many different methods; however, he laid the greatest emphasis on Self-enquiry and constantly recommended it, and therefore his method will be dealt with first.

It is not a new method. Indeed, being the most direct method of all, it must be the most ancient. However, in ancient times it had been a path reserved for the heroic few who could strive in solitude, withdrawn from the world in constant meditation. In recent times, as might be expected, it had become increasingly rare. What Bhagavan did was to restore it in a new form combined with *karma marga* (the path of action), in such a way that it could be used in the conditions of the modern world. Since it requires no ritual or outer form, it is in fact the ideal method for the needs of our times. And yet it is not weakened or diluted by being adapted to the modern conditions of life, but remains central and direct.

For the subsidence of the mind there is no other means more effective than Self-enquiry. Even though the mind subsides by other means, that is only apparently so; it will rise again.[1]

[1] W., § 12.

This is the direct method. All other methods are practised while retaining the ego and therefore many doubts arise and the ultimate question still remains to be tackled in the end. But in this method the final question is the only one and is raised from the very beginning.[1]

Self-enquiry leads directly to Self-realisation by removing the obstacles which make you think that the Self is not already realised.[2]

Meditation requires an object to meditate on, whereas in Self-enquiry there is only the subject and no object. That is the difference between them.[3]

D.: Why should Self-enquiry alone be considered the direct path to Realisation?

B.: Because every kind of path except Self-enquiry presupposes the retention of the mind as the instrument for following it, and cannot be followed without the mind. The ego may take different and more subtle forms at different stages of one's practice but it is never destroyed. The attempt to destroy the ego or the mind by methods other than Self-enquiry is like a thief turning policeman to catch the thief that is himself. Self-enquiry alone can reveal the truth that neither the ego nor the mind really exists and enable one to realise the pure, undifferentiated Being of the Self or the Absolute.[4]

> This statement that the mind is not used by the method of Self-enquiry was not always understood, and therefore Bhagavan, when asked, explained that it means that the mind is not taken for granted as a real entity but its very existence is questioned, and that this is the easiest way to dispel the illusion of its existence.

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[1] T., 146.
[2] T., 298.
[3] T., 390.
[4] M. G., p. 38.

B.: To ask the mind to kill the mind is like making the thief the policeman. He will go with you and pretend to catch the thief, but nothing will be gained. So, you must turn inward and see where the mind rises from and then it will cease to exist. (*In reference to this answer, Sri Thambi Thorai of Jaffna, who has been living as a sadhu in Pelakothu for over a year, asked me whether asking the mind to turn inward and seek its source is not also employing the mind. I put this doubt before Bhagavan.*)

B.: Of course, we are employing the mind. It is well known and admitted that only with the help of the mind, can the mind be killed. But instead of setting about saying there is a mind and I want to kill it, you begin to seek its source, and then you find it does not exist at all. The mind turned outwards results in thoughts and objects. Turned inwards it becomes itself the Self.[1]

> It can be said that the mind ceases to exist or that it becomes transformed into the Self; the meaning is really the same. It does not mean that a person becomes mindless, like a stone, but that the Pure Consciousness of the Self is no longer confined within the narrow limits of an individualised mind and that he no longer sees through a glass darkly, but with clarity and radiant vision.

By steady and continuous investigation into the nature of the mind, the mind is transformed into That to which 'I' refers; and that is in fact the Self. The mind has necessarily to depend for its existence on something gross; it never subsists by itself. It is the mind that is otherwise called the subtle body, ego, *jiva* or soul.

That which arises in the physical body as 'I' is the mind. If one enquires whence the 'I'-thought arises in the body in the first instance, it will be found that it is from the *hrdayam* or the Heart. That is the source and stay of the mind. Or again, even

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[1] D. D., p. 37.

if one merely continuously repeats to oneself inwardly 'I-I' with the entire mind fixed thereon, that also leads to the same source.

The first and foremost of all thoughts that arise in the mind is the primal 'I'-thought. It is only after the rise or origin of the 'I'-thought that innumerable other thoughts arise. In other words, only after the first personal pronoun, 'I', has arisen, do the second and third personal pronouns (you, he, etc.) occur to the mind; and they cannot subsist without it.

Since every other thought can occur only after the rise of the 'I'-thought, and since the mind is nothing but a bundle of thoughts, it is only through the enquiry, 'Who am I?' that the mind subsides. Moreover, the integral 'I'-thought implicit in such enquiry, having destroyed all other thoughts, itself finally gets destroyed or consumed, just as a stick used for stirring the burning funeral pyre gets consumed.[1]

> It must already be apparent from these indications that Self-enquiry as taught by Bhagavan is something very different from the introversion of psychologists. In fact, it is not really a mental process at all. Introversion means studying the composition and contents of the mind, whereas this is an attempt to probe behind the mind to the Self from which it arises.

When the mind or ego has to be discarded in any case, why waste time analysing it?

To enquire: 'Who am I that am in bondage?' and thus know one's real nature is the only Liberation. To keep the mind constantly turned inwards and to abide thus in the Self is the only Self-enquiry. Just as it is futile to examine the rubbish that has to be swept up only to be thrown away, so it is futile for him who seeks to know the Self to set to work enumerating the *tattvas* that envelop the Self and examining them instead of

[1] W., § 10.

casting them away. He should consider the phenomenal world, with reference to himself, as merely a dream.[1]

> Similarly Self-enquiry differs fundamentally from psychoanalysis or any other kind of psychiatric treatment. Such treatment can only aim at producing a normal, healthy, integrated human being but not at transcending the bounds of the individual human state, since those who conduct it have themselves not done this and cannot open a road they have not trod. One thing, however, that Self-enquiry in its initial stages has in common with psychiatric treatment is that it serves to bring up hidden thoughts and impurities from the depths of the mind.

D.: Other thoughts arise more forcibly when one attempts meditation.

B.: Yes, all kinds of thoughts arise in meditation. That is only right; for what lies hidden in you is brought out. Unless it rises up, how can it be destroyed?

Thoughts rise up spontaneously but only to be extinguished in due course, thus strengthening the mind.[2]

D.: When I concentrate, all sorts of thoughts arise and disturb me. The more I try, the more thoughts rise up. What should I do?

B.: Yes, that will happen. All that is inside will try to come out. There is no other way except to pull the mind up each time it wants to go astray and fix it in the Self.[3]

D.: Bhagavan has often said that one must reject other thoughts when one begins the quest; but thoughts are endless. If one thought is rejected another comes up and there seems to be no end at all.

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[1] W., § 21.
[2] M. G., p. 14.
[3] D. D., p. 41.

B.: I do not say that you must keep on rejecting thoughts. If you cling to yourself, to the 'I' thought, and your interest keeps you to that single thought, other thoughts will get rejected and will automatically vanish.[1]

> Just as Self-enquiry is not introspection as understood by the psychologists, so also it is not argument or speculation as understood by the philosophers.

D.: When I think, 'Who am I?', the answer comes: I am not this mortal body but am Consciousness or the Self. And then another thought suddenly arises. Why has the Self become manifest? In other words; 'Why has God created the world?'

B.: The enquiry: 'Who am I?' really means trying to find the source of the ego or of the 'I'-thought. You are not to occupy the mind with other thoughts, such as 'I am not the body'. Seeking the source of the 'I' serves as a means of getting rid of all other thoughts. You should not allow any scope for other thoughts such as you mention, but should keep the attention fixed on finding the source of the 'I'- thought by asking, when any other thought arises, to whom it occurs; and if the answer is 'to me', you then resume the thought: 'What is this 'I' and what is its source?'[2]

> Bhagavan did sometimes allow or even use mental argument but that was to convince the beginner of the unreality of the individual self or ego and thus induce him to take up Self-enquiry. The argument itself was not Self-enquiry.

D.: Who am I? How is the answer to be found?

B.: Ask yourself the question. The body (*annamayakosa*) and its functions are not 'I'. Going deeper, the mind

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[1] S. D. B., iv.
[2] D. D., p. 80.

(*manomayakosa*) and its functions are not 'I'. The next step takes one to the question: Wherefrom do these thoughts arise? The thoughts may be spontaneous, superficial, or analytical. They operate in the mind. Then who is aware of them? The existence of thoughts, their clear conception and operation, become evident to the individual. This analysis leads to the conclusion that the individuality is operative as the cogniser of the existence of thoughts and their sequence. This individuality is the ego, or, as people say, 'I'. *Vijnanamayakosa* (intellect) is only the sheath of the 'I' and not the 'I' itself. Enquiring further, the questions arise: What is this 'I'? Wherefrom does it come? 'I' was not aware in sleep. Simultaneously with its rise, sleep changes to dream and wakefulness. But I am not concerned with the dream state just now. Who am I now, in the wakeful state? If I originated on waking from sleep, then the 'I' was covered up with ignorance. Such an ignorant 'I' cannot be what the scriptures refer to or the wise affirm. 'I' am beyond even sleep; 'I' must be here and now, and must be what I was all along in sleep and dream also, unaffected by the qualities of these states. 'I' must therefore be the unqualified substratum underlying these three states (after *anandamayakosa* is transcended).[1]

Two Parsi ladies arrived from Ahmedabad and spoke with Bhagavan.

L.: Bhagavan, we have been spiritually inclined from childhood. We have read several books on philosophy and are attracted by Vedanta. So we read the Upanishads, *Yoga Vasishta, Bhagavad Gita*, etc. We try to meditate, but there is no progress in our meditation. We do not understand how to realise. Can you kindly help us towards realisation?

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[1] T., 25.

B.: How do you meditate?

L.: I begin by asking myself 'Who am I?' and eliminate the body as not 'I', the breath as not 'I', the mind as not 'I', but then I am unable to proceed further.

B.: Well, that is all right so far as the mind goes. Your process is only mental. Actually all the scriptures mention this process only in order to guide the seeker to the Truth. The Truth cannot be directly indicated; that is why this mental process is used. You see, he who eliminates all the 'not-I' cannot eliminate the 'I'. In order to be able to say 'I am not this' or 'I am That', there must be the 'I' to say it. This 'I' is only the ego, or the 'I'-thought. After the rising up of this 'I'-thought, all other thoughts arise. The 'I'-thought is therefore the root thought. If the root is pulled out, all the rest is uprooted at the same time. Therefore seek the root 'I'; question yourself: 'Who am I?'; find out the source of the 'I'. Then all these problems will vanish and the pure Self alone will remain.

L.: But how am I to do it?

B.: The 'I' is always there, whether in deep sleep, in dream or in the waking state. The one who sleeps is the same as the one who is now speaking. There is always the feeling of 'I'. If it were not so you would have to deny your existence. But you do not. You say: 'I am'. Find out who is.

L.: I still do not understand. You say the 'I' is now the false 'I'. How am I to eliminate this wrong 'I'?

B.: You need not eliminate any false 'I'. How can 'I' eliminate itself? All that you need do is to find out its origin and stay there. Your effort can extend only so far. Then the Beyond will take care of itself. You are helpless there. No effort can reach It.

L.: If 'I' am always – here and now – why do I not feel so?

B.: Who says that you do not? Does the real 'I' or the false 'I'? Ask yourself and you will find that it is the false 'I'. The false 'I' is the obstruction which has to be removed in order that the true 'I' may cease to be hidden. The feeling 'I have nor realised' is the obstruction to realisation. In fact, it is already realised. There is nothing more to be realised. If there were, realisation would be something new which did not yet exist, but was to come about in the future; but whatever is born will also die. If realisation is not eternal, it is not worth having. Therefore, what we seek is not something that must begin to exist but only that which is eternal but is veiled from us by obstructions. All that we need do is to remove the obstruction. What is eternal is not recognised as such, owing to ignorance. Ignorance is the obstruction. Get rid of it and all will be well. This ignorance is identical with the 'I'-thought. Find its source and it will vanish.

The 'I'-thought is like a spirit which, although not palpable, rises up simultaneously with the body, flourishes with it and disappears with it. The body-consciousness is the wrong 'I'. Give it up. You can do so by seeking the source of 'I'. The body does not say: 'I am'. It is you who say 'I am the body.' Find out who this 'I' is. Seek its source and it will vanish.

L.: Then, will there be bliss?

B.: Bliss is co-eval with Being-Consciousness. All the arguments relating to the eternal Being apply to eternal Bliss also. Your nature is Bliss. Ignorance is now hiding the Bliss, but you have only to remove the ignorance for the Bliss to be freed.

L.: Should we not find out the ultimate reality of the world as individual and God?

B.: These are conceptions of the 'I'. They arise only after the advent of the 'I'-thought. Did you think of them in deep sleep? Yet you existed in sleep, and the same 'you' is speaking

now. If they were real, would they not exist in your sleep also? They are dependent on the 'I'-thought. Again, does the world tell you: 'I am the world'? Does the body say: 'I am the body'? You say: 'This is the world' 'this is the body', and so on. So these are only your conceptions. Find out who you are, and that will be the end of all doubts.

L.: What becomes of the body after realisation? Does it continue to exist or not? We see realised people performing actions like other people.

B.: This question need not worry you now. You can ask it after realisation if you feel like it. As for realised beings, let them take care of themselves. Why do you worry about them? In fact, after realisation, neither the body nor anything else will appear different from the Self.

L.: If we are always Being-Consciousness-Bliss, why does God place us in difficulties? Why did He create us?

B.: Does God come and tell you that He placed you in difficulties? It is you who say so. It is the false 'I' again. If that disappears, there will be no one to say that God created this or that. That which is does not even say 'I am'. For does any doubt arise that 'I am not?' Only if a doubt arose whether one was a cow or a buffalo would one have to remind oneself that one is not an animal but a man; but this never happens. It is the same with one's own existence and realisation.[1]

This last quotation brings us back from what Self-enquiry is not, to what it is.

When the mind unceasingly investigates its own nature it transpires that there is no such thing as the mind. This is the direct path for all.

[1] T., 197.

The mind is merely thoughts. Of all thoughts the thought 'I' is the root. Therefore, the mind is only the thought 'I'. Whence does this thought 'I' arise? Seek for it within; it then vanishes. This is the pursuit of Wisdom. Where the 'I' vanishes, there appears an 'I-I' by itself. This is the Infinite (*Purnam*).[1]

If the ego is, everything else is also. If the ego is not, nothing else is. Indeed the ego is all. Therefore the enquiry as to what this ego is, is the only way of giving up everything.

The state of non-emergence of 'I' is the state of being THAT. Without questing for that state of non-emergence of 'I' and attaining It, how can one accomplish one's own extinction, from which the 'I' does not revive? Without that attainment, how is it possible to abide in one's true state, where one is THAT?

Just as a man would dive in order to get something that had fallen into the water, so one should dive into oneself with a keen, one-pointed mind, controlling speech and breath, and find the place whence the 'I' originates. The only enquiry leading to Self-realisation is seeking the source of the word 'I'. Meditation on 'I am not this; I am that' may be an aid to enquiry but it cannot be the enquiry. If one enquires 'Who am I?' within the mind, the individual 'I' falls down abashed as soon as one reaches the Heart and immediately Reality manifests itself spontaneously as 'I-I'. Although it reveals itself as 'I', it is not the ego but the perfect Being, the Absolute Self.[2]

B.: The notions of bondage and liberation are merely modifications of the mind. They have no reality of their own, and therefore cannot function of their own accord. Since they are modifications of something else, there must be an entity (independent of them) as their common source and support. If,

[1] E. I., vv. 17-20.
[2] F. V., 26-30.

therefore, one investigates into that source in order to know of whom the bondage or liberation is predicated, one will find that they are predicated of 'me', that is, oneself. If one then earnestly enquires 'Who am I?' one will see that there is no such thing as 'I' or 'me'. That which remains on seeing that the 'I' does not exist, is realised vividly and unmistakably as self-luminous and subsisting merely as Itself. This vivid Realisation, as a direct and immediate experience of the supreme Truth, comes quite naturally, with nothing uncommon about it, to everyone who, remaining just as he is, enquires introspectively without allowing the mind to become externalised even for a moment or wasting time in mere talk. There is, therefore, not the least doubt regarding the well-established conclusion that to those who have attained this Realisation and thus abide absolutely identical with the Self, there is neither bondage nor liberation.[1]

B.: The Self is Pure Consciousness. Yet a man identifies himself with the body which is insentient and does not itself say: 'I am the body'. Someone else says so. The unlimited Self does not. Who does? A spurious 'I' arises between Pure Consciousness and the insentient body and imagines itself to be limited to the body. Seek this and it will vanish like a phantom. The phantom is the ego or mind or individuality. All the scriptures are based on the rise of this phantom, whose elimination is their purpose. The present state is mere illusion. Its dissolution is the goal and nothing else.[2]

> Bhagavan here refers to the ego as the 'phantom' or a 'spurious I'. In the explanation to the two Parsi ladies quoted earlier, he spoke of a 'false I' and a 'true I'. For practical purposes, he did sometimes speak of giving up the false 'I' in quest of the true,

[1] S. I., Chap. IV, § 15.
[2] T., 427.

but that should not be taken as implying that there are two selves in a man. What he really meant was simply giving up the false identification of the 'I' as an individual being in order to realise one's true identity as the universal Self. He frequently insisted that there are not two 'I's of which one can seek and know the other. According to the truth of non-duality, to see the Self is to be the Self; otherwise, there would be the duality of a subject and object and the trinity of seer, sight and seen.

D.: How is one to realise the Self?

B.: Whose Self? Find out.

D.: Mine; but, who am I?

B.: It is you who must find out.

D.: I don't know.

B.: Just think over the question. Who is it that says: 'I don't know'? Who is the 'I' in your statement? What is not known?

D.: Somebody or something in me.

B.: Who is that somebody? In whom?

D.: Perhaps some power.

B.: Find out.

D.: Why was I born?

B.: Who has born? The answer is the same to all your questions.

D.: Who am I, then?

B.: (*Smiling*) Have you come to examine me? You must say who you are.

D.: However much I may try, I do not seem to catch the 'I'. It is not even clearly discernible.

B.: Who is it that says that the 'I' is not discernible? Are there two 'I's in you, that one is not discernible to the other?

D.: Instead of enquiring: 'Who am I?' can I put the question to myself: 'Who are *you*?' so that my mind may be fixed on you whom I consider to be God in the form of the

Guru? Perhaps I would come nearer to the goal of my quest by that enquiry than by asking myself: 'Who am I?'

B.: Whatever form your enquiry may take, you must finally come to the one 'I', the Self. All these distinctions made between 'I' and 'you', master and disciple, are merely a sign of ignorance. The supreme 'I' alone is. To think otherwise is to delude oneself.

Therefore, since your aim is to transcend here and now these superficialities of physical existence through self-enquiry, where is the scope for making the distinctions of 'you' and 'I' which pertain only to the body? When you turn the mind inwards, seeking the source of thought, where is the 'you' and where the 'I'? You should seek and be the Self that includes all.

D.: But, isn't it funny that the 'I' should be searching for the 'I'? Doesn't the enquiry, 'Who am I?' turn out in the end to be an empty formula? Or am I to put the question to myself endlessly, repeating it like some mantra?

B.: Self-enquiry is certainly not an empty formula; it is more than the repetition of any mantra. If the enquiry: 'Who am I?' were mere mental questioning, it would not be of much value. The very purpose of Self-enquiry is to focus the entire mind at its source. It is not, therefore, a case of one 'I' searching for another 'I'. Much less is Self-enquiry an empty formula, for it involves an intense activity of the entire mind to keep it steadily poised in pure Self-awareness. Self-enquiry is the one infallible means, the only direct one, to realise the unconditioned, absolute Being that you really are.[1]

> The following passages show still more clearly that it is a question of tracing the 'I' thought back to its source, not of one 'I' discovering another.

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[1] M. G., pp. 35-8.

V.: I am told that according to your school I must find out the source of my thought. How am I to do it?

B.: I have no school; however, it is true that one should trace the source of all thoughts.

V.: Suppose I have the thought 'horse', and try to trace its source. I find that it is due to memory and the memory in its turn is due to prior perception of the object 'horse', but that is all.

B.: Who asked you to think about all that? All those are also thoughts. What good will it do you to go on thinking about memory and perception? It will be endless, like the old dispute, which came first, the tree or the seed. Ask who has this perception and memory. That 'I' that has the perception and memory, whence does it arise? Find this out. Because perception or memory or any other experience only comes to that 'I'. You do not have such experiences during sleep and yet you say that you existed during sleep. And you exist now too. That shows that the 'I' continues while other things come and go.

V.: I am asked to find out the source of 'I' and in fact that is what I want to find out, but how can I? What is the source from which I came?

B.: You came from the same source in which you were during sleep. Only during sleep you could not know where you entered. That is why you must make the enquiry while awake.

Some of us advised the visitor to read *Who am I*? and *Ramana Gita* and Bhagavan also told him he might do so.

He did so during the day and in the evening he said to Bhagavan: 'Those books prescribe Self-enquiry, but how is one to do it?'

B.: That must also be prescribed in the books.

V.: Am I to concentrate on the thought: 'Who am I?'

B.: It means that you must concentrate to see where the 'I'-thought arises. Instead of looking outwards, look inwards and see where the 'I'-thought arises.

V.: And Bhagavan says that if I see that, I shall realise the Self?

B.: There is no such thing as realising the Self. How is one to realise or make real what is real? People all 'realise' or regard as real what is unreal, and all they have to do is to give up doing so. When you do that, you will remain as you always are and the Real will be Real. It is only to help people give up regarding the unreal as real that all the religions and practices taught by them have come into being.

V.: Whence comes birth?

B.: Whose birth?

V.: The Upanishads say: He who knows Brahman becomes Brahman.

B.: It is not a matter of becoming but of Being.[1]

> "There is no such thing as realising the Self" – Bhagavan has often said this in order to remind those who asked that the Self alone is, now and eternally, and is not something new to be discovered. This paradox is of the essence of non-dualism.

In answer to a question as to what is the best way to the goal, Bhagavan said: 'There is no goal to be reached. There is nothing to be attained. You are the Self. You exist always. Nothing more can be predicated of the Self than that it exists. Seeing God or the Self is only being the Self, that is yourself. Seeing is Being. You, being the Self, want to know how to attain the Self. It is like a man being at Ramanasramam and asking how many ways there are of going to Ramanasramam and which is the best way for him. All that is

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[1] D. D., pp. 268-9.

required of you is to give up the thought that you are this body and give up all thoughts of external things or the non-Self. As often as the mind goes out towards objects, stop it and fix it in the Self or 'I'. That is all the effort required on your part.'[1]

> Despite this paradox, however, Bhagavan also stressed the necessity of effort, as explained in Chapter Two of this book.

Ceaseless practice is essential until one attains without the least effort that natural and primal state of mind which is free from thought, in other words, until the 'I', 'my' and 'mine' are completely eradicated and destroyed.[2]

> It is in order to safeguard the viewpoint that there is nothing new to be discovered that Advaita explains that it is only a question of removing the screen of ignorance, just as by removing water-plants one reveals beneath them the water that was already there, or as the removal of clouds reveals the blue sky that is there already but was hidden by them.

D.: How can one know the Self?

B.: The Self always is. There is no knowing it. It is not some new knowledge to be acquired. What is new and not here and now cannot be permanent. The Self always is, but knowledge of it is obstructed and the obstruction is called ignorance. Remove the ignorance and knowledge shines forth. In fact, it is not the Self that has this ignorance or even knowledge. These are only accretions to be cleared away. That is why the Self is said to be beyond knowledge and ignorance. It remains as it naturally is – that is all.[3]

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[1] D. D., p. 332.
[2] S. I., Chap. II, § 18.
[3] T., 49.

This concentration on the Self, of course, requires intense control of the mind and many complained that it was not easy.

In the evening a visitor asked Bhagavan how to control the wandering mind. He began by saying that it was a question which particularly troubled him. Bhagavan replied laughing: 'That is nothing particular to you. That is what everybody asks and what is dealt with by all the scriptures, such as the *Gita*. What other way is there except to draw the mind back every time it strays or turns outwards, as advised in the *Gita*? Of course it is not an easy thing to do. It will come only with practice.'

The visitor said that the mind strays after what it desires and won't stay fixed on the object we set before it.

When there was this sort of complaint, Bhagavan sometimes answered that Self-enquiry does not set any object before the mind but simply turns it in on itself, seeking its source. On this occasion, however, he answered from the point of view of desire or happiness.

Everybody seeks only what brings him happiness. Your mind wanders out after some object or other because you think that happiness comes from it, but find out where all happiness comes from, including that which you regard as coming from sense objects. You will find that it all comes from the Self alone, and then you will be able to abide in the Self.[1]

Sometimes people complained of the difficulty of quelling thoughts. Bhagavan brought them round again to Self-enquiry by reminding them that it is the thinker or, in case of doubt, the doubter whom one must examine. There may be a thousand doubts, but one does not doubt the existence of the doubter. Who is he?

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[1] D. D., p. 298.

All doubts will cease only when the doubter and his source have been found. It is no use endlessly removing doubts. If we clear up one another will arise and there will be no end to them. But if the doubter himself is found to be really non-existent by seeking his source then all doubts will cease.[1]

> Mind-control, of course, means concentration; but by 'concentration' Bhagavan did not mean concentrating on one thought (although he did not always discourage this) but concentrating on the sense of being, the feeling of 'I am', and excluding all thoughts.

B.: Concentration is not thinking of one thing. On the contrary, it is excluding all thoughts, since all thoughts obstruct the sense of one's true being. All efforts are to be directed simply to removing the veil of ignorance.[2]

> In a number of passages already quoted, Bhagavan does not only tell the questioner to investigate the 'I'-thought but to find out where it arises. This connects Self-enquiry with concentration on the heart at the right side (referred to in Chapter One) and shows still more clearly that it is not a mental process. Indeed, an actual liberation that can be felt physically arises in this centre during Self-enquiry.

Concentrating the mind solely on the Self will lead to happiness or bliss. Drawing in the thoughts, restraining them and preventing them from straying outwards is called detachment (*vairagya*). Fixing them in the Self is spiritual practice (*sadhana*). Concentrating on the heart is the same as concentrating on the Self. Heart is another name for Self.[3]

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[1] D. D., p. 26.
[2] T., 398.
[3] D. D., p. 294.

G.V. Subbaramaiah: Is it stated in any book that for ultimate and final realisation one must ultimately come to the heart, even after reaching the *sahasrara* (the thousand-petalled lotus, the centre in the crown of the head) and that the Heart is at the right side?

B.: No. I have not come across this in any book, although in a Malayalam book on medicine I came across a stanza locating the heart on the right side and I have translated it into Tamil in the *Supplement to the Forty Verses*.

We know nothing about the other centres. We cannot be sure what we arrive at by concentrating on them and realising them. But as the 'I' arises from the heart it must sink back and merge there for Self-realisation. Anyway, that has been my experience.[1]

Know that the pure and changeless Self-awareness in the Heart is the Knowledge which, through destruction of the ego, bestows Liberation.

The body is inert like an earthen pot. Since it has no I-consciousness and since in deep sleep, when bodiless, we experience our natural being, the body cannot be the 'I'. Who then is it that causes I-ness? Where is he? In the Heart-cave of those who thus enquire and who know and abide as the Self, Lord Arunachala Siva shines forth as Himself as 'That-am-I' Consciousness.[2]

D.: Bhagavan was saying that the heart is the centre of the Self?

B.: Yes, it is the one supreme centre of the Self. You need have no doubts about that. The real Self is there in the heart behind the ego-self.

D.: Will Bhagavan please tell me where in the body it is?

B.: You cannot know it with your mind or picture it with your imagination, although I tell you that it is here (*pointing to*

[1] D. D., p. 253.
[2] F. V. S., 9, 10.

the right side of the chest). The only direct way to realise it is to stop imagining and try to be yourself. Then you automatically feel that the centre is there. It is the centre spoken of in the scriptures as the heart cavity.

D.: Can I be sure that the ancients meant this centre by the term 'heart'?

B.: Yes, you can, but you should try to have the experience rather than locate it. A man does not have to go and find where his eyes are in order to see. The heart is there, always open to you, if you care to enter it, always supporting your movements, although you may be unaware of it. It is perhaps more correct to say that the Self is the Heart. Really the Self is the centre and is everywhere aware of itself as the Heart or Self-awareness.

D.: When Bhagavan says that the Heart is the Supreme centre of the Spirit or the Self, does that imply that it is not one of the six yogic centres (*chakras*)?

B.: The yogic centres, counting from the bottom upwards, are a series of centres in the nervous system. They represent various stages, each having its own kind of power or knowledge, leading to the *Sahasrara*, the thousand-petalled lotus in the brain, where is seated the Supreme *Shakti* (power). But the Self that supports the whole movement of the *Shakti* is not located there but supports it from the heart-centre.

D.: Then it is different from the manifestation of *Shakti*?

B.: Really there is no manifestation of *Shakti* apart from the Self. The Self became all these *Shaktis*. When the yogi attains the highest state of spiritual awareness (*samadhi*) it is the Self in the Heart that supports him in that state whether he is aware of it or not. But if his awareness is centred in the heart, he realises that, whatever centres or states he may be in, he is always the same truth, the same heart, the one Self, the spirit that is present

throughout, eternal and immutable. The *Tantra Sastra* calls the heart *Surya Mandala* or the solar orb, and the *Sahasrara* as *Chandra Mandala* or lunar orb. This shows the relative importance of the two.[1]

> Just as this concentration on the heart establishes a point of contact with yoga, so also Bhagavan sometimes pointed out the affinity with *bhakti*, the path of devotion, and said that the two paths lead to the same end. Perfect devotion means complete surrender of the ego to God or Guru conceived of as other than oneself, while Self-enquiry leads to dissolution of the ego. More will be said about *bhakti marga* in the next chapter, but the following explanation shows how the two paths converge.

D.: If the 'I' is an illusion, who is it that casts off the illusion?

B.: The 'I' casts off the illusion of the 'I' and yet remains 'I'. Such is the paradox of Self-realisation. The Realised do not see any paradox in it. Consider the case of the worshipper. He approaches God and prays to be absorbed in Him. He then surrenders himself in faith and by concentration. And what remains afterwards? In the place of the original 'I', self-surrender leaves a residuum of God in which the 'I' is lost. That is the highest form of devotion or surrender and the peak of detachment.

You may give up this and that of 'my' possessions, but if, instead, you give up 'I' and 'mine' all is given up at a stroke and the very seed of possession is destroyed. Thus the evil is nipped in the bud or crushed in the germ. But detachment must be very strong to do this. The craving to do it must equal the craving of a man who is held under water to rise to the surface and breathe.[2]

> If distracting thoughts are a danger on one hand, so also is sleep a danger on the other hand. In fact, people who are

[1] S. D. B., xvii-xx.
[2] T., 28.

> beginning a spiritual path may find themselves assailed by an overpowering wave of sleepiness whenever they begin to meditate. And then, if they stop meditating, this passes and they are not sleepy at all. This is simply one form of the ego's resistance and it has to be broken down.

Mr. Bhargava also said something about sleep and this led Bhagavan to speak about sleep as follows:

What is required is to remain fixed in the Self always. The obstacles to that are distraction by things of the world (including sense objects, desires and tendencies) on the one hand and sleep on the other. Sleep is always mentioned in the books as the first obstacle to samadhi and various methods are prescribed for overcoming it according to the stage of evolution of the person concerned. First, one is enjoined to give up all worldly distractions and to restrict sleep. But then it is said, for instance in the *Gita*, that one need not give up sleep entirely. One should not sleep at all during day time, and even during night restrict sleep to the middle portion, from about ten to two. But another method that is prescribed is not to bother about sleep at all. Whenever it overtakes you, you can do nothing about it, so simply remain fixed in the Self or in meditation every moment of your waking life and take up meditation again the moment you wake, and that will be enough. Then, even during sleep, the same current of thought or meditation will be working. This is evident because if a man goes to sleep with any strong thought working in his mind he finds the same thought present when he wakes up. It is of the man who does this with meditation that it is said that even his sleep is *samadhi*.[1]

> It is important to remember this, because the Maharshi often spoke of sleep as an example of the egoless state. As the above passage shows, he did not mean that physical sleep is to be

[1] D. D., pp. 279-80.

encouraged. That is only a dark, unconscious counterpart of the true egoless state, which is pure Consciousness.

Another source of questions among those who continued further with meditation was that they sometimes came up against a blank or void or a feeling of fear, but they were told to carry on, holding firmly to that which experiences the void or fear. The same answer was also given to those who experienced a state of bliss. There can be neither fear nor pleasure, neither vision nor void, without someone to experience it.

D.: When I reach the thoughtless stage in my *sadhana*, I enjoy a certain pleasure but sometimes I also experience a vague fear which I cannot properly describe.

B.: Whatever you experience, you should never rest content with it. Whether you feel pleasure or fear, ask yourself who feels it and continue your efforts until both pleasure and fear are transcended and all duality ceases and the Reality alone remains. There is nothing wrong in such things being experienced, but you must never stop at that. For instance you must never rest content with the pleasure of *laya* (dissolution) experienced when thought is quelled but must press on until all duality ceases.[1]

In the afternoon the following questions were put by Mr. Bhargava, an elderly visitor from Jhansi in Uttar Pradesh: (1) How am I to search for the 'I' from start to finish? (2) When I meditate, I reach a stage where there is a vacuum or void. How should I proceed from there?

B.: Never mind whether there are visions or sounds or anything else or whether there is void. Are you present during all these or are you not? You must have been there during the void to be able to say that you experienced a void. To be fixed in that 'you' is the quest from start to finish. In all books on

[1] D. D., p. 224.

Vedanta you will find this question of a void or nothing being left raised by the disciple and answered by the Guru. It is the mind that sees objects and has experiences and that finds a void when it ceases to see and experience, but that is not 'you'. You are the constant illumination that lights up both the experience and the void. It is like the theatre light that enables you to see the theatre, the actors, and the play while the play is going on but also remains alight and enables you to say that there is no play on when it is all finished. Or there is another illustration: We see objects all around us but in complete darkness we do not see them and we say: 'I see nothing'. In the same way, you are there even in the void you mention.

You are the witness of the three bodies: the gross, the subtle, and the causal, and of the three times: past, present and future, and also this void. In the story of the tenth man, when each of them counted and thought they were only nine, each one forgetting to count himself, there is a stage when they think one is missing and do not know who it is; and that corresponds to the void. We are so accustomed to the notion that all that we see around us is permanent and that we are this body, that when all this ceases to exist we imagine and fear that we also have ceased to exist.

Bhagavan also quoted verses 212 and 213 from *Vivekachudamani* in which the disciple says: "After I eliminate the five sheaths as not-Self, I find that nothing at all remains"; and the Guru replies that the Self or That by which all modifications, including the ego and all its creatures and their absence (that is the void), are perceived, is always there.

Bhagavan continued and said: "The nature of the Self or 'I' must be illumination. You perceive all modifications and their absence. How? To say that you get the illumination from another would raise the question how he got it and there would be no

end to the chain of reasoning. So you yourself are the illumination. The usual illustration of this is the following: You make all kinds of sweets of various ingredients and in various shapes and they all taste sweet because there is sugar in all of them and sweetness is the nature of sugar. And in the same way all experiences and the absence of them contain the illumination which is the nature of the Self. Without the Self they cannot be experienced, just as without sugar not one of the articles you make can taste sweet. (*Later he continued*): First one sees the Self as objects, then one sees the Self as void, then one sees the Self as the Self; only in this last case there is no seeing because seeing is being.[1]"

> Before closing this chapter it may be well to give a few more specific rules or rather to indicate that they exist but are not essential. It is usual to conduct what is called 'meditation' during regular hours, morning and evening, sitting with a straight spine and closed eyes. I say 'what is called meditation' because this word is commonly used for Self-enquiry and concentration on the "I am" or the heart, as described in this chapter. It is, of course, far from the mental reflection that commonly goes by that name. In India it is usual to sit cross-legged on the ground. However, all such rules of technique are less important in Self-enquiry than with other less direct methods. Indeed, this is obvious from the fact that Self-enquiry has gradually to be extended from set hours of meditation until it becomes the undercurrent of all thoughts and actions.

Mr. Evans-Wentz asked a few questions. They related to yoga. He wanted to know if it was right to kill animals such as tigers, deer and so on and use the skin as a seat for the yoga-posture (*asana*).

B.: The mind is the tiger or the deer.

D.: If everything is illusion, can one then take life?

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[1] D. D., pp. 277-9.

B.: Who has the illusion? That is what you must find out. In fact, everyone is a killer of the Self (*atmahan*) at every moment of his life.

D.: Which posture is the best?

B.: Any posture, possibly *sukhasana* (the easy or half-Buddha posture). But that is immaterial for *jnana* (the path of knowledge).

D.: Does posture indicate temperament?

B.: Yes.

D.: What are the properties and effects of a tiger's skin or wool or a deer's skin as a seat?

B.: Some people have found out and described them in books on yoga. They correspond to conductors and non-conductors of magnetism, and so on. But all this is of no importance on the path of knowledge (*jnana marga*). Posture really means 'steadfastness in the Self' and it is inward.

D.: Which is the most suitable time for meditation?

B.: What is time?

D.: Tell me what it is!

B.: Time is only an idea. There is only Reality. Whatever you think it is, it appears to be. If you call it time, it is time. If you call it existence, it is existence, and so on. After calling it time, you divide it into days and nights, months, years, hours, minutes, and so on. Time is immaterial for the path of knowledge. But some of these rules and disciplines are good for beginners.

D.: Does Bhagavan recommend any special posture for Europeans?

B.: It depends on the mental equipment of the individual. There are no hard and fast rules.[1]

D.: Is meditation to be practised with eyes open or closed?

B.: It may be done either way. The important thing is that the mind should be turned inwards and kept active in its quest.

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[1] T., 17.

Sometimes, it happens that when the eyes are closed, latent thoughts rush forth with great vigour; but, on the other hand, it may be difficult to turn the mind inwards with the eyes open. It requires strength of mind. The mind is pure by nature but contaminated by taking in objects. The great thing is to keep it active in its quest without taking in external impressions or thinking of other things.[1]

> Although, as will be shown in the next chapter, the Maharshi approved of various methods and authorised them when they suited the practitioner, he was nevertheless careful that they should not be confused with the direct method of Self-enquiry. For instance, there are indirect paths which sedulously cultivate the various virtues; but when asked about this he replied simply that on the direct path of Self-enquiry no such technique is necessary.

D.: It is said in some books that one should cultivate all the good or divine qualities in order to prepare oneself for Self-realisation.

B.: All good or divine qualities are included in spiritual knowledge and all bad or demoniac qualities are included in ignorance. When knowledge comes, ignorance goes and all the divine qualities appear automatically. If a man is Self-realised he cannot tell a lie or commit a sin or do anything wrong. It is no doubt said in some books that one should cultivate one virtue after another and thus prepare for ultimate realisation, but for those who follow the *jnana marga* (path of knowledge) Self-enquiry is quite enough for acquiring all the divine qualities, they need not do anything else.[2]

> In general, he approved the use of incantations by those who found them helpful but he was insistent that Self-enquiry should not become a mantra.

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[1] T., 61.
[2] D. D., p. 276.

D.: Please tell me how I am to realise the Self? Am I to make an incantation of 'Who am I?'

B.: No. It is not intended to be used as an incantation.[1]

However, the method which is most apt to be confused with Self-enquiry is the meditation 'I am He' and therefore he frequently warned against this confusion.

Self-enquiry is a different method from the meditation 'I am Siva' or 'I am He.' I rather lay stress on Self-knowledge, because you are first concerned with yourself before you proceed to know the world and its Lord. The 'I am He' or 'I am Brahman' meditation is more or less mental but the quest for the Self of which I speak is a direct method and is superior to the other. For, as soon as you undertake the quest and begin to go deeper and deeper, the real Self is waiting there to receive you and then whatever is done is done by something else and you have no hand in it. In this process all doubts are automatically given up just as one who sleeps forgets all his cares for the time being.[2]

Although the scriptures proclaim 'Thou art That,' it is only a sign of weakness to meditate 'I am That, not this,' because you are eternally That. What has to be done is to investigate what one really is and remain That.[3]

Only if the thought 'I am a body' occurs will the meditation 'I am not this, I am that' help one to abide as that. Why should you forever be thinking 'I am That'? Is it necessary for a man to go on thinking 'I am a man'? Are we not always That?[4]

A Punjabi announced himself to the Maharshi as having been directed here by Sri Sankaracharya of Kamakoti Peeta

[1] T., 486.
[2] S. D. B., viii.
[3] F. V., 32.
[4] F. V. 36.

from Jalesvar near Puri-Jaganath. He is a world traveller. He has practised Hatha Yoga and some contemplation along the lines of 'I am Brahman'. After a few moments blank prevails, his brain gets heated and he becomes afraid of death. He wants guidance from the Maharshi.

B.: Who sees the blank?

D.: I know that I see it.

B.: The Consciousness overlooking the blank is the Self.

D.: That doesn't satisfy me. I can't realise it.

B.: The fear of death arises only after the 'I'-thought arises. Whose death do you fear? To whom does the fear come? So long as there is identification of the Self with the body, there will be fear.

D.: But I am not aware of my body.

B.: Who says that he is not aware?

D.: I don't understand.

(He was then asked to say what exactly was his method of meditation. He said: *Aham Brahmasmi* 'I am Brahman'.)

B.: 'I am Brahman' is only a thought. Who says it? Brahman himself does not say so. What need is there for him to say it? Nor can the real 'I' say so. For 'I' always abides as Brahman. So it is only a thought. Whose thought is it? All thoughts come from the unreal 'I', that is the 'I'-thought. Remain without thinking. So long as there is thought, there will be fear.

D.: When I go on thinking on this line, forgetfulness ensues. The brain becomes heated and I become afraid.

B.: Yes, the mind is concentrated in the brain and hence you get a hot sensation there. That is because of the 'I'-thought. So long as there is thought, there will be forgetfulness. There is the thought 'I am Brahman'; then forgetfulness supervenes; then the 'I'-thought arises and simultaneously the fear of death also. Forgetfulness and thought exist only for the 'I'-thought.

Investigate this and it will disappear like a phantom. What remains then is the real 'I'. That is the Self. The thought 'I am Brahman' may be an aid to concentration insofar as it keeps other thoughts away and persists alone. But then you have to ask whose thought it is. It will be found to come from the 'I'. But where does the 'I'-thought come from? Probe into it and it will vanish. The Supreme Self will shine forth of itself. No further effort is needed. When the one real 'I' remains alone, it will not need to say, 'I am Brahman'. Does a man go on repeating 'I am a man'? Unless he is challenged why should he declare himself a man? Does anyone mistake himself for an animal that he should say 'No, I am not an animal, I am a man?'. Similarly, since Brahman or 'I' alone is, there is no one to challenge it, and so there is no need to repeat 'I am Brahman."[1]

> Throughout this chapter, Self-enquiry has been spoken of mainly as a spiritual exercise or 'meditation' to be practised at certain fixed times. It does indeed begin so and, so long as effort is needed, such times of intensive meditation continue to be helpful, but that is not enough. The self-awareness which begins to be experienced during such meditation has to be cultivated at other times also and indeed begins to awaken spontaneously, forming an undercurrent to one's activities. The aim is to make it more and more continuous. It will be seen that this explains Bhagavan's injunction, referred to in Chapter Three, to conduct one's spiritual quest in the world and not to retire to a hermitage.

D.: Is a set meditation necessary for strengthening the mind?

B.: Not if you keep the idea always before you, that it is not your work. At first effort is needed to remind yourself of it, but later on it becomes natural and continuous. The work will

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[1] T., 202.

go on of its own accord and your peace will remain undisturbed. Meditation is your true nature. You call it meditation now, because there are other thoughts distracting you. When these thoughts are dispelled, you remain alone – that is, in the state of meditation, free from thoughts; and that is your real nature, which you are now trying to realise by keeping away other thoughts. Such keeping away of other thoughts is now called 'meditation'. But when the practice becomes firm, your real nature shows itself as true meditation.[1]

> For the reason mentioned in the previous chapter, a Guru often withholds the technique of spiritual practice as a secret to be revealed only to those whom he finds fit and initiates into it personally. However, with Self-enquiry as taught by Bhagavan, no such precaution is necessary. It is a person's own understanding that opens this method to him, or his lack of understanding that closes it.

D.: May I be assured that there is nothing further to be learnt, so far as the technique of spiritual practice is concerned, than what is written in Bhagavan's books? I ask because in all other systems, the Guru holds back some secret technique to reveal to his disciple at the time of initiation.

B.: There is nothing more to be known than what you find in the books. No secret technique. It is all an open secret in this system.[2]

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[1] M. G., pp. 13-4.
[2] D. D., p. 325.

CHAPTER SIX

OTHER METHODS

D.: Which method is the best?

B.: That depends on the temperament of the individual. Every person is born with the *samskaras* (characteristics or tendencies) from his past lives. One method will prove easy to one person and another to another. There can be no general rule.[1]

In the following passage, Bhagavan indicates the purpose of all the methods, and the goal they aim at.

There are many methods. You may practise Self-enquiry, asking yourself 'Who am I?'; or if that does not appeal to you, you may meditate on 'I am Brahman', or some other theme; or you may concentrate on an incantation or do invocation. The object in every case is to make the mind one-pointed, to concentrate it on one thought and thereby exclude the many other thoughts. If we do this, the one thought also eventually goes and the mind is extinguished at its source.[2]

Dr. Masalawala placed in Bhagavan's hands a letter he had received from his friend V.K. Ajgaonkar, a gentleman of about 35, (a follower of Jnaneswar Maharaj) who is said to have attained *Jnana* in his 28th year. The letter said: 'You call me *purna*. Who is not *purna* in this world?'. Bhagavan agreed and,

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[1] T., 580.
[2] D. D., p. 28.

continuing in the vein in which he discoursed this morning (15-3-46), said: 'We first limit ourselves and then seek to become unlimited, as in fact we always are. All our effort is only directed to giving up the notion that we are limited...'

The letter went on to say: 'Ramana Maharshi is an exponent of the *Ajata* doctrine of Advaita Vedanta. Of course it is a bit difficult.' Bhagavan remarked on this: "Somebody has told him so. I do not teach only the *Ajata* doctrine. I approve of all schools. The same truth has to be expressed in different ways to suit the capacity of the hearer. The *Ajata* doctrine says: 'Nothing exists except the one Reality. There is no birth or death, no projection or drawing in, no striving, no aspirant, no release, no bondage, no liberation. The one unity alone exists forever.' To such as find it difficult to grasp this truth and who ask: 'How can we ignore this solid world we see all around us?' the dream experience is pointed out and they are told, 'All that you see depends upon the seer. Apart from the seer, there is no seen.' This is called *drishti-srishti-vada* or the argument that one first creates everything out of his mind and then sees what his mind has created. To such as cannot grasp even this and who further argue: 'The dream experience is so short, while the world always exists. The dream experience was limited to me, but the world is felt and seen not only by me, but by so many, and we cannot call such a world non-existent', the argument called *srishti-drishti-vada* is addressed and they are told: 'God first created such-and-such a thing, out of such-and-such an element, and then something else' and so forth. That alone will satisfy this class. Their mind is otherwise not satisfied and they ask themselves: 'How can all geography, all maps, all sciences, stars, planets, and the rules governing or relating to them all be totally untrue?' To such it is best to say: 'Yes, God created all this and so you see it.'"

Dr. Masalawala objected: 'But all these teachings cannot be true. Only one doctrine can be true.'

Bhagavan said: 'All these viewpoints are only to suit the capacity of the learner. The absolute can only be one.[1]

However, although Bhagavan approved of other paths for those who could not follow Self-enquiry, he did say to the present writer: '*All other methods lead up to Self-enquiry.*' If a devotee of his found that some other, less direct path served him better, Bhagavan would guide him on this until he could gradually bring him to Self-enquiry.

Talking of the innumerable ways of different seekers after God, Bhagavan said: 'Each should be allowed to go his own way, the way for which he alone may be built. It will not do to convert him to another path by violence. The Guru will go with the disciple along his own path and then gradually turn him into the supreme path when the time is ripe. Suppose a car is going at top speed. To stop it and to turn it at once would lead to a crash.'[2]

Other methods are not necessarily exclusive of Self-enquiry; in fact some of them may very well be combined with it.

SAT SANG

The greatest of all aids to Self-realisation is the presence of a Realised Man. This is called *Sat Sang* which means literally 'fellowship with Being'. Even here Bhagavan would sometimes explain that the real 'Being' is the Self and therefore no physical form is needed for *Sat Sang*. Nevertheless, he often dwelt on its benefits.

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[1] D. D., pp. 173-4.
[2] D. D., p. 49.

Association with Sages who have realised the Truth removes material attachments; on these attachments being removed, the attachments of the mind are also destroyed. Those whose attachments of mind are thus destroyed become one with That which is Motionless. They attain Liberation while yet alive. Cherish association with such Sages.

That Supreme state which is obtained here and now as a result of association with Sages, and realised through the deep meditation of Self-enquiry in contact with the Heart, cannot be gained with the aid of a Guru or through knowledge of the scriptures, or by spiritual merit, or by any other means.

If association with Sages is obtained, to what purpose are the various methods of self-discipline? Tell me, of what use is a fan when the cool, gentle south wind is blowing? The heat of mental and bodily excitement is allayed by (the rays of) the moon; want and misery are removed by the *kalpaka* tree; sins are washed away by the sacred water of the Ganges. But all these afflictions are altogether banished by the mere darshan of the peerless Sage.

Neither the holy waters of pilgrimage nor the images of gods made of earth and stone can stand comparison with the benign look of the Sage. These purify one only after countless days of grace, but no sooner does the Sage bestow his gracious glance than he purifies one.[1]

It should be mentioned that these five verses were not actually composed by Bhagavan but translated from Sanskrit for inclusion in his *Supplementary Forty Verses*. The statement in the second verse that such grace cannot be gained with the aid of Guru is using the word 'Guru' in its lower sense of 'teacher'; otherwise it would have the same meaning as 'Sage' and the comparison would be pointless.

[1] F. V. S., 1 - 5.

BREATH-CONTROL

Breath-control can have various meanings. It can be retention of breath, or regulation of breathing according to a definite rhythm, or merely watching the breathing and remaining attentive to it. The Maharshi often authorised the use of breath-control, but did not as a rule specify what form it was to take – perhaps because those who asked for his authorisation were usually practising a form of it prescribed by some Guru and merely wished to know whether they could continue to do so. He himself, although competent to authorise any practice, did not teach or prescribe the more technical forms of breath-control.

As there are elaborate treatises on the elements of *ashtanga yoga* only as much as is necessary is written here. Anyone who desires to know more must resort to a practising yogi with experience and learn from him in detail.[1]

When he did specify what kind of breath-control was to be practised it was usually just watching the breath, the type which is least likely to be harmful if practised without guidance from a Guru who specialises in this kind of technical, indirect path.

Mr. Prasad asked whether the regular form of breath control is not better, in which breathing in, holding the breath, and breathing out are to the rhythm of 1:4:2. Bhagavan replied: 'All such rhythms, sometimes regulated not by counting but by incantations, are aids for controlling the mind: that is all. Watching the breath is also one form of breath-control. Holding the breath is more violent and may be harmful when there is no proper Guru to guide the practiser at every step; but merely watching the breath is easier and involves no risk.[2]

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[1] S. E., § 34.
[2] D. D., pp. 55-6.

The Maharshi was careful in authorising breath-control to explain why it was used – that it was helpful simply as a step towards mind control.

The principle underlying the system of yoga is that the source of thought is also the source of breath and the vital force; therefore if one of them is effectively controlled the other is also automatically brought under control.[1]

The source of the mind is the same as that of the breath and the vital forces. It is really the multitude of thoughts that constitute the mind; and the I-thought is the primal thought of the mind and is itself the ego. But breath too has its origin at the same place whence the ego rises. Therefore, when the mind subsides, breath and the vital forces also subside; and conversely when the latter subside, the former also subsides.

Breath and vital forces are also described as the gross manifestations of the mind. Till the hour of death the mind sustains and supports these forces in the physical body; and when life becomes extinct, the mind envelops them and carries them away. During sleep, however, the vital forces continue to function, although the mind is not manifest. This is according to the divine law and is intended to protect the body and to remove any possible doubt as to whether it is alive or dead while one is asleep. Without such arrangement by nature sleeping bodies would often be cremated alive. The vitality apparent in breathing is left behind by the mind as a 'watchman'. But in the wakeful state and in *samadhi*, when the mind subsides, breath also subsides. For this reason (because the mind has the sustaining and controlling power over breath and vital forces, and is therefore ulterior to both of them) the practice of breath

[1] S. I., Chap. II, § 3(iv).

control is merely helpful in subduing the mind, but it cannot bring about its final extinction.[1]

It follows from this that breath-control, as authorised by Sri Bhagavan, is necessary only for those who cannot control the mind directly.

D.: Is it necessary to control one's breath?

B.: Breath-control is only an aid for diving inwards. One can as well dive down by controlling the mind. On the mind being controlled, the breath is automatically controlled. There is no need to practise breath-control; mind control is enough. Breath-control is recommended for the person who cannot control his mind directly.[2]

This implies that Sri Bhagavan did not authorise breath-control as an independent technique, but only as an approach towards mind-control. In itself he warned that its effects were impermanent.

For the subsidence of the mind there is no other means more effective and adequate than Self-enquiry. Even though by other means the mind subsides, that is only apparently so; it will rise again.

For instance, the mind subsides by means of breath-control; yet such subsidence lasts only so long as the control of breath and vital forces continues; and when they are released the mind also gets released and immediately, being externalised, it continues to wander through the force of subtle tendencies.[3]

Therefore, those who use it on the path prescribed by the Maharshi should also know when to give it up.

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[1] W., § 12.
[2] T., 448.
[3] W., § 12.

B.: Breath-control is a help in controlling the mind and is advised for such as find they cannot control the mind without some such aid. For those who can control their mind and concentrate, it is not necessary. It can be used at the beginning until one is able to control the mind but then it should be given up.[1]

> Another reason for caution in the use of breath-control is that it may lead to subtle experiences which can distract the seeker from his true goal. As will be shown in the next chapter, Bhagavan always warned against interest in powers and experiences or desire for them; he sometimes specifically connected this warning with the use of breath-control.

B.: Breath-control is also a help. It is one of the various methods that are intended to help us attain *ekagrata* or one-pointedness of mind. Breath-control can also help to control the wandering mind and attain this one-pointedness and therefore it can be used. But one should not stop there. After obtaining control of the mind through breath-control, one should not rest content with any experiences which may accrue therefrom but should harness the controlled mind to the question, 'Who am I?' till the mind merges in the Self.[2]

ASANAS

> It was usual for devotees of Bhagavan to sit crosslegged in meditation before him; but the more elaborate yogic postures or asanas were not practised. As explained in the previous chapter, such postures are less important in Self-enquiry than on a yogic path.

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[1] D. D., p. 228.
[2] D. D., p. 221-2

D.: A number of asanas are mentioned. Which of them is the best?

B.: One-pointedness of mind is the best posture.[1]

HATHA YOGA

B.: The hatha yogis claim to keep the body fit so that the enquiry may be effected without obstacles. They also say that life must be prolonged so that the enquiry may be carried to a successful end. Furthermore there are those who use various drugs (*kayakalpa*) to that end. Their favourite example is that the canvas must be perfect before the painting is begun. Yes, but which is the canvas and which the painting? According to them the body is the canvas and the inquiry into the Self the painting. But isn't the body itself a picture on the canvas of the Self?

D.: But hatha yoga is much spoken of as an aid.

B.: Yes. Even great pandits well-versed in Vedanta continue the practice of it. Otherwise their minds will not subside. So you may say it is useful for those who cannot otherwise still the mind.[2]

LIGHT-GAZING

D.: Why should one not adopt other means, such as gazing at a light?

B.: Light-gazing stupefies the mind and produces catalepsy of the will for the time being, but it produces no permanent benefit.[3]

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[1] T., 557.
[2] T., 619.
[3] T., 27.

CONCENTRATION ON SOUND

There are those who concentrate on the hearing of a sound – not any physical sound but sound from the subtle plane. The Maharshi did not disapprove of this but reminded them to hold on to the Self and find out who it is that hears the sound. The concentration achieved is good but does not in itself lead far enough. Enquiry also is needed.

A Gujarati gentleman said that he was concentrating on sound (*nada*) and desired to know if the method was right.

B.: Meditation on *nada* is one of the various approved methods. Its adherents claim a very special virtue for it. According to them it is the easiest and most direct method. Just as a child is lulled to sleep by lullabies, so *nada* soothes one to the state of *samadhi*. Again, just as a king sends his state musicians to welcome his son on his return from a long journey, so also *nada* takes the devotee into the Lord's abode in a pleasing manner. *Nada* helps concentration, but after it begins to be felt, the practice should not be made an end in itself. *Nada* is not the objective; the subject should firmly be held. Otherwise a blank will result. Though the subject is there even in the blank one must remember his own Self. *Nada Upasana* (meditation on sound) is good; it is better if associated with Self-enquiry.[1]

CONCENTRATION ON THE HEART OR BETWEEN THE EYEBROWS

Concentration on the point between the eye-brows is a yogic practice. Bhagavan recognised its efficacy, especially

[1] T., 148.

when combined with incantation, but recommended concentration on the heart on the right side as being both safer and more effective.

A Maharashtra lady of middle age, who had studied *Jnaneswari* and *Vichara Sagara*, and was practising concentration between the eyebrows, had felt shivering and fear and did not progress. She required guidance. The Maharshi told her not to forget the seer. The sight is fixed between the eyebrows, but the seer is not kept in view. If the seer be always remembered it will be all right.[1]

A visitor said: We are asked to concentrate on the spot in the forehead between the eyebrows. Is that right?

B.: Everyone is aware that he exists. Yet one ignores that awareness and goes about in search of God. What is the use of fixing one's attention between the eyebrows? The aim of such advice is to help the mind to concentrate. It is one of the forcible methods of checking the mind and preventing its dissipation. The mind is forcibly directed into one channel and this is a help to concentration. But the method of realisation is the enquiry 'Who am I?'. The present trouble affects the mind and it can only be removed by the mind.[2]

D.: Sri Bhagavan speaks of the Heart as the seat of Consciousness and as identical with the Self. What exactly does the word 'Heart' signify?

B.: The question about the Heart arises because you are interested in seeking the source of Consciousness. To all deep thinking minds, the enquiry about the 'I' and its nature has an irresistible fascination. Call it by any name, God, Self, the Heart or the seat of Consciousness, it is all the same. The point to be

[1] T., 162.
[2] T., 557.

grasped is this: that Heart means the very core of one's being, the centre without which there is nothing whatever.

D.: But Sri Bhagavan has specified a particular place for the Heart within the physical body – that is in the chest, two digits to the right of the median.

B.: Yes, that is the centre of spiritual experience according to the testimony of Sages. The spiritual heart-centre is quite different from the blood-propelling, muscular organ known by the same name. The spiritual heart-centre is not an organ of the body. All that you can say of the heart is that it is the core of your being, that with which you are really identical (as the word in Sanskrit literally means) whether you are awake, asleep or dreaming, whether you are engaged in work or immersed in *samadhi*.

D.: In that case, how can it be localised in any part of the body? Fixing a place for the Heart would imply setting physiological limitations to That which is beyond space and time.

B.: That is right. But the person who puts the question about the position of the Heart considers himself as existing with or in the body. While putting the question now, would you say that your body alone is here but that you are speaking from somewhere else?

No, you accept your bodily existence. It is from this point of view that any reference to a physical body comes to be made. Truly speaking, pure Consciousness is indivisible; it is without parts. It has no form or shape, no within or without. There is no right or left... Pure Consciousness – which is the Heart – includes all; and nothing is outside or apart from it. That is the ultimate truth.

D.: How shall I understand Sri Bhagavan's statement that the experience of the heart-centre is at that particular place in the chest?

B.: Pure Consciousness wholly unrelated to the physical body and transcending the mind is a matter of direct experience. Sages know their bodiless, eternal existence, just as an unrealised man knows his bodily existence. But the experience of Consciousness can be with bodily awareness as well as without it. In the bodiless experience of Pure Consciousness the Sage is beyond time and space, and no question about the position of the Heart can arise at all. Since, however, the physical body can not subsist (with life) apart from Consciousness, bodily awareness has to be sustained by pure Consciousness. The former, by nature, is limited and can never be co-extensive with the latter which is Infinite and Eternal. Body-consciousness is merely a miniature reflection of the pure Consciousness with which the Sage has realised his identity. For him, therefore, body-consciousness is only a reflected ray, as it were, of the self-effulgent, infinite Consciousness which is himself. It is in this sense alone that the Sage is aware of his bodily existence.

D.: For men like me, who have neither the direct experience of the Heart nor the consequent recollection, the matter seems to be somewhat difficult to grasp. About the position of the Heart itself, perhaps, we must depend upon some sort of guess-work.

B.: If the determination of the position of the Heart is to depend on guess-work even in the case of the unrealised, the question is surely not worth much consideration. No, it is not on guess-work that you have to depend, it is an unerring intuition.

D.: Who has the intuition?

B.: All people.

D.: Does Bhagavan credit me with an intuitive knowledge of the Heart?

B.: No, not of the Heart, but of the position of the Heart in relation to your identity.

D.: Sri Bhagavan says that I intuitively know the position of the Heart in the physical body?

B.: Why not?

D.: (*Pointing to himself*) It is to *me* personally that Bhagavan is referring?

B.: Yes. That is the intuition! How did you refer to yourself by gesture just now? Did you not put your finger on the right side of the chest? That is exactly the place of the heart-centre.

D.: So then, in the absence of direct knowledge of the heart-centre, I have to depend on this intuition?

B.: What is wrong with it? When a schoolboy says: 'It is I that did the sum correctly', or when he asks you: 'Shall I run and get the book for you', would he point to the head that did the sum correctly or to the legs that will swiftly get you that book? No, in both cases, his finger is pointed quite naturally towards the right side of the chest, thus giving innocent expression to the profound truth that the source of 'I'-ness in him is there. It is an unerring intuition that makes him refer to himself, to the Heart which is the Self, in that way. The act is quite involuntary and universal, that is to say, it is the same in the case of every individual. What stronger proof than this do you require about the position of the Heart-centre in the physical body?

D.: But the question is: which is the correct view of the two, namely: (1) that the centre of spiritual experience is the place between the eyebrows, or (2) that it is the Heart.

B.: For the purpose of practice you may concentrate between the eyebrows if you like; it would then be *bhavana* or imaginative contemplation of the mind; whereas the supreme

state of *anubhava* or Realisation, with which you become wholly identified and in which your individuality is completely dissolved, transcends the mind. Then, there can be no objectified centre to be experienced by you as a subject distinct and separate from it.

D.: I would like to put my question in slightly different words. Can the place between the eyebrows be said to be the seat of the Self?

B.: You agree that the Self is the ultimate source of Consciousness and that it subsists equally during all the three states of mind. But see what happens when a person in meditation is overcome by sleep. As the first symptom of sleep his head begins to nod; but this could not happen if the Self were situated between the eyebrows, that centre cannot be called its seat without implying that the Self often forsakes its own place, which is absurd. The fact is that the *sadhaka* may have his experience at any centre or *chakra* on which he concentrates his mind, but that does not make such a centre the seat of the Self...

D.: Since Bhagavan says that the Self may function at any of the centres or *chakras* while its seat is in the Heart, is it not possible that by the practice of intense concentration or *dhyana* between the eyebrows, this centre may itself become the seat of the Self?

B.: As long as it is merely the stage of practice of concentration in order to control your attention at one spot, any consideration about the seat of the Self would merely be theorising. You consider yourself the subject, the seer, and the place whereon you fix the attention becomes the object seen. This is merely *bhavana*. When, on the contrary, you see the Seer himself, you merge in the Self, you become one with it; that is the Heart.

D.: Then, is the practice of concentration between the eyebrows advisable?

B.: The final result of the practice of any kind of *dhyana* is that the object on which the aspirant fixes his mind ceases to exist as distinct and separate from the subject. Subject and object become one Self, and that is the Heart. The practice of concentration on the centre between the eyebrows is one of the methods of training, and thereby thoughts are effectively controlled for the time being. The reason is that all thought is an outer activity of the mind; and thought, in the first instance, follows sight, physical or mental. It is important, however, that this practice of fixing one's attention between the eyebrows should be accompanied by incantations. Because next in importance to the eye of the mind is the ear of the mind (that is mental visualisation of speech), either to control and thereby strengthen the mind, or to distract and thereby dissipate it. Therefore, while fixing the mind's eye on a centre, as for instance, between the eyebrows, you should also practise the mental articulation of a Divine Name or incantation. Otherwise you will soon lose hold on the object of concentration. This kind of practice leads to the identification of the Name, Word or Self – whatever you may call it – with the centre selected for the purpose of meditation. Pure Consciousness, the Self or the Heart is the final Realisation.[1]

THE SAHASRARA

Tantric paths teach the gradual uncoiling of the Kundalini or spiritual current in a man. As it uncoils and rises upwards, it

[1] M. G., pp. 54-9, 61-2.

enfranchises a series of *chakras* or spiritual centres in the body, each bestowing its own powers and perceptions until it culminates in the *Sahasrara* or thousand-petalled lotus in the brain or the crown of the head. When asked about this, Bhagavan replied that, whatever the experience may be, the ultimate seat of the Self, and therefore of Realisation, is the Heart.

D.: Why doesn't Sri Bhagavan direct us to practise concentration on some particular centre or *chakra*?

B.: The Yoga Sastras say that the *Sahasrara* or brain is the seat of the Self. The *Purusha Sukta* declares that the Heart is its seat. To enable the aspirant to steer clear of any possible doubt, I tell him to take up the thread or the clue of 'I'-ness and follow it to its source. Because, firstly it is impossible for anybody to entertain any doubt about this 'I' notion; secondly, whatever be the means adopted, the final goal is Realisation of the source of I-am-ness, which is what you begin from in your experience. If you, therefore, practise Self-enquiry, you will reach the Heart which is the Self.[1]

D.: Does the *Jivanadi* (subtle nerve column) really exist or is it a figment of the imagination?

B.: The yogis say that there is a *nadi* called the *jivanadi, atmanadi* or *paranadi*. The Upanishads speak of a centre from which thousands of *nadis* branch off. Some locate this in the brain and others in other places. The *Garbhopanishad* traces the formation of the foetus and the growth of the child in the womb. The ego is considered to enter the child through the fontanelle in the seventh month of its growth. In evidence thereof it is pointed out that the fontanelle is tender in a baby and is also seen to pulsate. It takes some months for it to ossify. Thus the ego comes from above, enters through the fontanelle and works

[1] M. G., p. 62.

through thousands of *nadis* which are spread over the whole body. Therefore the seeker of truth must concentrate on the *sahasrara*, that is the brain, in order to regain his source. Breath-control is said to help the yogi to rouse the *Kundalini-Shakti* which lies coiled in the solar plexus. The *Shakti* rises through a nerve called the *sushumna*, which is embedded in the core of the spinal cord and extends to the brain.

If one concentrates on the *sahasrara* there is no doubt that the ecstasy of *samadhi* ensues. The *vasanas*, that is the latencies, are however, not destroyed. The yogi is therefore bound to wake up from *samadhi* because the release from bondage is not yet accomplished. He must still try to eradicate the *vasanas* in order that the latent tendencies yet inherent in him may not disturb the peace of his *samadhi*. So he passes down from the *sahasrara* to the heart through what is called the *jivanadi*, which is only a continuation of the *sushumna*. The *sushumna* is thus a curve. It starts from the solar plexus, rises through the spinal cord to the brain and from there bends down and ends in the heart. When the yogi has reached the heart, *samadhi* becomes permanent. Thus we see that the heart is the final centre.

Some Upanishads also speak of a hundred and one *nadis* which spread from the heart, one of them being the vital *nadi*. If the ego descends from above and is reflected in the brain, as the yogis say, there must be a reflecting surface. This must also be capable of limiting the Infinite Consciousness to the limits of the body. In short, the Universal Being becomes limited as an ego. Such a reflecting medium is furnished by the aggregate of *vasanas* of the individual. It acts like the water in a pot which reflects an object. If the pot is drained of its water there will be no reflection. The object will remain without being reflected. The object here is the Universal Being-Consciousness which is

all-pervading and therefore immanent in all. It need not be cognised by reflection alone. It is self-resplendent. Therefore, the seeker's aim must be to drain away the *vasanas* from the heart and let no reflecting medium obstruct the light of the Eternal Consciousness. This is achieved by the search for the origin of the ego and by diving into the heart. This is the direct path to Self-realisation. One who adopts it need not worry about *nadis*, brain, *sushumna, kundalini*, breath-control and the six yogic centres.

The Self does not come from anywhere nor does it enter the body through the crown of the head. It is as it is, ever shining, ever steady, unmoving and unchanging. The changes which are noticed are not inherent in the Self, for the Self abides in the heart and is self-luminous like the sun. The changes are seen in Its light. The relationship between the Self and the body or the mind may be compared to that of a clear crystal and its background. If the crystal is placed against a red flower it shines red, if against green it shines green, and so on. The individual confines himself to the limits of the changeable body or of the mind which derives its existence from the unchanging Self. All that is necessary is to give up this mistaken identity and, that done, the ever shining Self will be seen to be the single, non-dual Reality.[1]

SILENCE

> On the whole, the Maharshi did not approve of vows of silence. If the mind is controlled, useless speech will be avoided; but abjuring speech will not quieten the mind. The effect cannot produce the cause.

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[1] T., 616.

D.: Isn't a vow of silence helpful?

B.: A vow is only a vow. It may help meditation to some extent; but what is the use of keeping the mouth shut and letting the mind run riot? If the mind is engaged in meditation, what need is there for speech? Nothing is as good as meditation. What is the use of a vow of silence if one is engrossed in activity?[1]

DIET

In general, although attaching little importance to physical aids to meditation, the Maharshi was insistent on the advantages of limiting oneself to *sattvic*, that is vegetarian and non-stimulating food.

Regulation of diet, restricting it to *sattvic* food, taken in moderate quantities, is the best of all rules of conduct and the most conducive to the development of *sattvic* (pure) qualities of mind. These in turn help one in the practice of Self-enquiry.[2]

The following is the conclusion of 'Self-enquiry', the first book that he wrote.

It is within our power to adopt a simple and nutritious diet and, with earnest and incessant endeavour, to eradicate the ego – the cause of all misery – by stopping all mental activity born of the ego.

Can obsessing thoughts arise without the ego, or can there be illusion apart from such thoughts?[3]

He also confirmed this when asked by devotees.

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[1] T., 371.
[2] W., § 12.
[3] *Words of Grace*, p. 40.

D.: Are there any aids to (1) concentration, and (2) casting off distractions?

B.: Physically, the digestive and other organs are to be kept free from irritation. Therefore food is regulated both in quantity and quality. Non-irritants are eaten, avoiding chillies, excess of salt, onions, wine, opium, and so on. Avoid constipation, drowsiness and excitement and all foods which induce them. Mentally, take interest in one thing and fix the mind on it. Let that interest be self-absorbing to the exclusion of everything else. This is dispassion (*vairagya*) and concentration.[1]

Mrs. Pigott returned from Madras for a further visit and asked questions concerning diet.

Mrs. P.: What diet is suitable for a person engaged in spiritual practice?

B.: *Sattvic* food in moderate quantities.

Mrs. P.: What food is *sattvic*?

B.: Bread, fruit, vegetables, milk and such things.

Mrs. P.: Some people in the North eat fish. Is that permissible?

> To this question Bhagavan did not reply. He was always reluctant to criticise others and this question was inviting him either to do so or to change what he had said.

Mrs. P.: We Europeans are accustomed to a particular diet and change of diet affects the health and weakens the mind. Isn't it necessary to keep up physical health?

B.: Quite necessary. The weaker the body, the stronger the mind grows.

Mrs. P.: In the absence of our usual diet our health suffers and the mind loses strength.

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[1] T., 28.

It will be noticed that Bhagavan and Mrs. Piggot were using the term 'strength of mind' in different meanings. By 'strong' Bhagavan was meaning 'ungovernable', whereas Mrs. Piggot was meaning 'powerful'. Therefore the next question, which enabled her to put her point of view.

B.: What do you mean by 'strength of mind'?

Mrs. P.: The power to eliminate worldly attachment.

B.: The quality of one's food influences the mind. The mind feeds on the food consumed.

Mrs. P.: Really! But how can Europeans accommodate themselves to *sattvic* food?

B.: (*turning to Mr. Evans-Wentz*) You have been taking our food. Does it inconvenience you at all?

E.W.: No, because I am accustomed to it.

B.: Custom is only an adjustment to environment. It is the mind that matters. The fact is that the mind has been trained to find certain foods good and palatable. The necessary food value is obtainable in vegetarian as well as non-vegetarian food; only the mind desires the sort of food that it is used to and which it considers palatable.

Mrs. P.: Do these restrictions apply to the realised man also?

B.: He is stabilised and not influenced by the food he takes.[1]

It was very characteristic of Bhagavan that, although he would answer questions about diet quite firmly when asked, he would not enjoin a vegetarian diet on any devotee who did not ask him. It was also characteristic that, under his silent influence, it would sometimes happen that one who did not ask would gradually begin to feel an aversion to meat-food and an inclination to change over to a purer diet.

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[1] T., 22.

Just as Bhagavan disapproved of all extremes, so he disapproved of fasting.

D.: Can fasting help towards Realisation?

B.: Yes, but it is only a temporary help. It is mental fasting that is the real aid. Fasting is not an end in itself. There must be spiritual development at the same time. Absolute fasting weakens the mind too and leaves you without sufficient strength for the spiritual quest. Therefore eat in moderation and continue the quest.

D.: They say that ten days after breaking a month's fast the mind becomes pure and steady and remains so forever.

B.: Yes, but only if the spiritual quest has been kept up right through the fast.[1]

CELIBACY

There is no need to say much about celibacy, since it has been dealt with in an earlier chapter. It is normal in India that all those who do not renounce the world to become *sadhus* marry. Bhagavan always insisted that *brahmacharya* is living constantly in Brahman. He did not encourage formal adoption of the saffron garb (external *sannyasa*). He neither enjoined nor discouraged celibacy, though occasionally he did evince interest in births and marriages among the devotees.

BHAKTI

We come now to *bhakti marga*, the path of love and devotion, worship and surrender. This is usually considered the very antithesis of Self-enquiry, since it is based on the presumption of duality, of worshipper and worshipped, lover and beloved,

[1] T., 170.

> whereas Self-enquiry presumes non-duality. Therefore theorists are apt to presume that if one is based on truth the other must be based on error, and in expounding one they only too often condemn the other. Bhagavan not only recognised both these paths but guided his followers on them both. He often said:
>
> "There are two ways; ask yourself, 'Who am I?' or surrender."
>
> Many of his followers chose the latter way.

D.: What is unconditional surrender?

B.: If one surrenders completely, there will be no one left to ask questions or to be considered. Either the thoughts are eliminated by holding on to the root thought, 'I', or one surrenders unconditionally to the Higher Power. These are the only two ways to Realisation.[1]

> Self-enquiry dissolves the ego by looking for it and finding it to be non-existent, whereas devotion surrenders it; therefore both come to the same ego-free goal, which is all that is required.

B.: There are only two ways to conquer destiny or to be independent of it. One is to enquire whose this destiny is and to discover that only the ego is bound by it and not the Self, and that the ego is non-existent. The other way is to kill the ego by completely surrendering to the Lord, realising one's helplessness and saying all the time: 'Not I, but Thou, oh Lord!', giving up all sense of 'I' and 'mine' and leaving it to the Lord to do what he likes with you. Surrender can never be regarded as complete so long as the devotee wants this or that from the Lord. True surrender is the love of God for the sake of love and nothing else, not even for the sake of salvation. In other words, complete effacement of the ego is necessary to conquer destiny, whether you achieve this effacement through Self-enquiry or through *bhakti-marga*.[2]

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[1] T., 321.

[2] D. D., p. 266.

The spark of spiritual knowledge (*Jnana*) will consume all creation like a mountain-heap of cotton. Since all the countless worlds are built upon the weak or non-existent foundations of the ego, they all disintegrate when the atom-bomb of knowledge falls on them. All talk of surrender is like stealing sugar from a sugar image of Ganesha and then offering it to the same Ganesha. You say that you offer up your body and soul and all your possessions to God, but were they yours to offer? At best you can say: 'I wrongly imagined till now that all these, which are Yours, were mine. Now I realise that they are Yours and I shall no longer act as though they were mine.' And this knowledge that there is nothing but God or the Self, that 'I' and 'mine' do not exist and that only the Self exists, is *Jnana*.[1]

He often explained however, that true devotion is devotion to the Self and therefore it comes to the same as Self-enquiry.

It is enough that one surrenders oneself. Surrender is giving oneself up to the original cause of one's being. Do not delude yourself by imagining this source to be some God outside you. One's source is within oneself. Give yourself up to it. That means that you should seek the source and merge in it. Because you imagine yourself to be out of it, you raise the question, 'Where is the source?' Some contend that just as sugar cannot taste its own sweetness for there must be someone to taste and enjoy it, so an individual cannot both be the Supreme and also enjoy the Bliss of that State; therefore the individuality must be maintained separate from the Godhead in order to make enjoyment possible. But is God insentient like sugar? How can one surrender oneself and yet retain one's individuality for

[1] D. D., p. 49.

supreme enjoyment? Furthermore they also say that the soul, on reaching the divine region and remaining there, serves the supreme Being. Can the sound of the word 'service' deceive the Lord? Does He not know? Is He waiting for these people's services? Would He not – Pure Consciousness – ask in turn: 'Who are you apart from Me that presume to serve Me?'

If, on the other hand, you merge in the Self there will be no individuality left. You will become the Source itself. In that case what is surrender? Who is to surrender, and to whom? This constitutes devotion, wisdom and Self-enquiry. Among the Vaishnavites, too, Saint Nammalwar says: "I was in a maze, clinging to 'I' and 'mine'; I wandered without knowing myself. On realising myself I understand that I myself am You and that 'mine' (that is, my possessions) is only Yours." Thus, you see, devotion is nothing more than knowing oneself. The school of qualified monism also admits it. Still, adhering to their traditional doctrine, they persist in affirming that individuals are part of the Supreme – his limbs as it were. Their traditional doctrine says also that the individual soul should be made pure, and then surrendered to the Supreme; then the ego is lost and one goes to the region of Vishnu after death; then finally there is the enjoyment of the Supreme (or the Infinite). To say that one is apart from the primal source is itself a pretension; to add that one divested of the ego becomes pure and yet retains individuality only to enjoy or serve the Supreme is a deceitful stratagem. What duplicity this is – first to appropriate what is really His, and then pretend to experience or serve Him! Is not all this known to Him?[1]

> It is obvious that surrender in the total uncompromising sense in which Bhagavan demands it is not easy.

[1] T., 208.

As often as one tries to surrender, the ego raises its head and one has to try to suppress it. Surrender is not an easy thing. Killing the ego is not an easy thing. It is only when God Himself by His Grace draws the mind inwards that complete surrender can be achieved.[1]

Dr. Syed asked Bhagavan: Doesn't total or complete surrender imply that even desire for liberation or God should be given up?

B.: Complete surrender does imply that you should have no desire of your own, that God's will alone is your will and you have no will of your own.

Dr. S.: Now that I am satisfied on that point, I want to know what are the steps by which I can achieve surrender?

B.: There are two ways; one is looking into the source of the 'I' and merging into that source; the other is feeling 'I am helpless by myself. God alone is all-powerful and except for throwing myself completely on Him there is no other means of safety for me,' and thus gradually developing the conviction that God alone exists and the ego does not count. Both methods lead to the same goal. Complete surrender is another name for *Jnana* or Liberation.[2]

> However, partial surrender can come first and gradually become more and more complete.

D.: I find surrender impossible.

B.: Complete surrender is impossible in the beginning but partial surrender is possible for all. In course of time that will lead to complete surrender.[3]

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[1] D. D., p. 263.
[2] D. D., pp. l62-3.
[3] T., 244.

The dualists may however object that the devotional path approved by Bhagavan is not that which they have in mind, since theirs presupposes the permanent duality of God and worshipper. In such cases, as in the last sentence of the following dialogue, Bhagavan would raise the discussion above theory, bidding them first achieve the surrender to a separate God, of which they spoke, and then see whether they had any further doubts.

The state we call realisation is simply being oneself, not knowing anything or becoming anything. If one has realised, then he is That which alone is and which alone has always been. He cannot describe that state. He can only be That. Of course we talk loosely of Self-realisation for want of a better term, but how is one to realise or make real that which alone is real? What we all are doing is 'realising' or regarding as real, that Which is unreal. This habit has to be given up. All spiritual effort under all systems is directed only to this end. When we give up regarding the unreal as real, then Reality alone will remain and we shall be That.

The Swami replied: 'This exposition is all right in the framework of non-duality, but there are other schools which do not insist on the disappearance of the triad of knower, knowledge and known as the condition for Self-realisation. There are schools which believe in the existence of two and even three eternal entities. There is the *bhakta*, for instance. In order that he may worship there must be a God'.

B.: Whoever objects to his having a separate God to worship so long as he needs one? Through devotion he develops until he comes to feel that God alone exists, and that he himself does not count. He comes to a stage when he says. 'Not I but Thou; not my will, but Thine'. When that stage is reached, which is called complete surrender in *bhakti marga*, one finds

that effacement of the ego is the attainment of the Self. We need not quarrel whether there are two entities or more or only one. Even according to dualists and according to *bhakti marga*, complete surrender is necessary. Do that first and then see for yourself whether the one Self alone exists or whether there are two or more.

Bhagavan further added: 'Whatever may be said to suit the different capacities of different men, the truth is that the state of Self-realisation must be beyond the triad of knower, knowledge and known. The Self is the Self; that is all that can be said of it.'

The Swami then asked whether a *Jnani* could retain his body after attaining Self-realisation. He added: 'It is said that the impact of Self-realisation is so forceful that the weak physical body cannot bear it for more than twenty-one days at the longest.' Bhagavan replied: 'What is your idea of a *Jnani*? Is he the body or something different? If he is something apart from the body, how can he be affected by the body? Books speak of different kinds of Liberation: *videhamukti* (without body) and *jivanmukti* (with body). There may be different stages on the path but there are no degrees of Liberation.[1]

Sometimes Bhagavan was asked how the paths of love and knowledge could be the same since love postulates duality.

D.: Love postulates duality. How can the Self be the object of love?

B.: Love is not different from the Self. Love of an object is of a lower type and cannot endure, whereas the Self is Love. God is Love.[2]

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[1] D. D., pp. 181-2.
[2] T., 433.

For those whose temperament and state of development demanded it, the Maharshi approved of ritualistic worship, which usually accompanies a devotional path.

A visitor said to Bhagavan: 'Priests prescribe various rituals and forms of worship and people are told that it is a sin not to observe them. Is there any need for such ritual and ceremonial worship?

B.: Yes, such worship is also necessary. It may not help you, but that does not mean that it is necessary for no one and is no good at all. What is necessary for the infant is not necessary for the graduate. But even the graduate has to make use of the alphabet he learnt in the infant class. He knows its full use and significance.[1]

Worship might also take the form of concentration on one of the Hindu gods, that is one of the modes in which Hindus conceive of God.

D.: What are the steps of practical training?

B.: It depends on the qualifications and nature of the seeker.

D.: I worship an idol.

B.: Go on doing so. It leads to concentration of mind. Get one-pointed. All will come right in the end. People think that Liberation (*moksha*) is somewhere outside them to be sought for. They are wrong. It is only knowing the Self in you. Concentrate, and you will get it. It is your mind that is the cycle of births and deaths (*samsara*).

D.: My mind is very unsteady. What should I do?

B.: Fix your attention on any single thing and try to hold on to it. Everything will come right.

D.: I find concentration difficult.

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[1] D. D., p. 93.

B.: Keep on practising and your concentration will come to be as easy as breathing. That will be the crown of your achievement.[1]

> However he did not approve of the desire to see visions – or in fact, any desire at all, even the desire for rapid realisation.

Miss Uma Devi, a Polish lady who has become a Hindu, said to Sri Bhagavan: Once before I told Sri Bhagavan how I had a vision of Siva at about the time I became a Hindu. A similar experience occurred to me at Courtallam. These visions are momentary, but they are blissful. I want to know how they can be made permanent and continuous. Without Siva there is no life in what I see around me. I am so happy when I think of Him. Please tell me how I can make the vision of Him continuous.

B.: You speak of a vision of Siva, but a vision always presumes an object. That implies the existence of a subject. The value of the vision is the same as that of the seer. That is to say, the nature of the vision is on the same plane as that of the seer. Appearance implies disappearance also. Therefore a vision can never be eternal. But Siva is eternal. The vision of Siva implies the existence of the eyes to see it, of the intellect behind the sight and finally of Consciousness underlying the seer. This vision is not as real as one imagines it to be, because it is not intimate and inherent; it is not first hand. It is the result of several successive phases of Consciousness. Consciousness alone does not vary. It is eternal. It is Siva. A vision implies someone to see it, but this someone cannot deny the existence of the Self. There is no moment when the Self as Consciousness does

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[1] T., 31.

not exist, nor can the seer remain apart from Consciousness. This Consciousness is the Eternal Being and is only Being. The seer cannot see himself. Does he deny his existence because he cannot see himself as he sees a vision? No; so the true vision does not mean seeing but BE-ing. TO BE is to realise – Hence 'I AM THAT I AM'. I AM is Siva. Nothing else can be without Him. Everything has its being in Siva, because of Siva. Therefore enquire: 'Who am I?' Sink deep within and abide as the Self. That is Siva as BE-ing. Do not expect to have visions of Him repeated. What is the difference between the objects you see and Siva? He is both subject and object. You cannot be without Siva. Siva is always realised, here and now. If you think you have not realised Him you are wrong. That is the obstacle to realising Him. Give up that thought also and realisation is there.

D.: Yes, but how shall I effect it as quickly as possible?

B.: That is another obstacle to Realisation. Can there be an individual without Siva? Even now He is you. There is no question of time. If there were a moment of non-realisation, the question of realisation could arise. But you cannot be without Him. He is already realised, ever realised and never non-realised. Surrender to Him and abide by His will, whether He appears or vanishes; await His pleasure. If you ask Him to do as you please, it is not surrender but command. You cannot have Him obey you and yet think you have surrendered. He knows what is best and when and how. Leave everything entirely to Him. The burden is His.

You have no longer any cares. All your cares are His. That is surrender. That is *bhakti*.[1]

D.: A vision of God is something glorious.

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[1] T., 450.

B.: A vision of God is only a vision of the Self objectified as the God of your particular faith. What you have to do is to know the Self.[1]

Bhagavan was often heard to say: 'To know God is to love God, therefore the paths of *jnana* and *bhakti* (knowledge and devotion) come to the same.'

JAPA

Japa, that is the use of incantations and invocations of a Divine Name, is one of the most widely practised techniques of spiritual training. It has particular affinity with the *bhakti* paths of love and devotion. The Maharshi approved of it, subject, of course, to the condition illustrated in the story of the king and his minister on page 93, that the person who practised any incantation had been duly authorised to do so by a qualified guru. He himself occasionally authorised the use of invocations, but very seldom.

The point is to keep out all other thoughts except the one thought of OM or Ram or God. All incantations and invocations help to do that.[2]

The more devotion there is behind the words the better this is accomplished, and therefore the more effective is the incantation.

D.: When I invoke the Divine Name for an hour or more I fall into a state like sleep. On waking up I recollect that my invocation has been interrupted, so I try again.

B.: 'Like sleep', that is right. It is the natural state. Because you now identify yourself with the ego, you look upon the natural

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[1] T., 621.
[2] D. D., p. 93.

state as something which interrupts your work. So you must have the experience repeated until you realise that it is your natural state. You will then find that the invocation is extraneous, but still it will go on automatically. Your present doubt is due to false identification of yourself with the mind that makes the invocation. Invocation really means 'clinging to one thought to the exclusion of all others'. That is the purpose of it. It leads to absorption which ends in Self-realisation or *Jnana*.

D.: How should I practise invocation?

B.: One should not use the name of God mechanically and superficially without a feeling of devotion. When one uses the name of God one should call on Him with yearning and unreservedly surrender oneself to Him. Only after such surrender is the name of God constantly with you.[1]

> In its early stages an incantation may even be accompanied by visualisation of the form of a Guru or of a mythological form of God.

D.: My practice has been continuous invocation of the names of God while breathing in and of the names of Sai Baba while breathing out. Simultaneously with this I see the form of Baba always. Even in Bhagavan I see Baba. The external appearances are also much alike. Bhagavan is thin. Baba was a little stout. Should I continue this method or change it? Something within tells me that if I stick to name and form I shall never get beyond them but I can't understand what further to do if I gave them up. Will Bhagavan please enlighten me?

B.: You may continue with your present method. When the *japa* becomes continuous, all other thoughts cease and one is in one's real nature which is invocation or absorption. We

[1] M. G., p. 17-8.

turn our minds outwards to things of the world and are therefore not aware that our real nature is always invocation. When by conscious effort, or invocation, or meditation as we call it, we prevent our minds from thinking of other things, then what remains is our real nature, which is invocation. So long as you think you are name and form, you can't escape name and form in invocation. When you realise that you are not name and form, name and form will drop off themselves. No other effort is necessary. Invocation or meditation will lead to it naturally and as a matter of course. Invocation which is now regarded as the means, will then be found to be the goal. There is no difference between God and His name.[1]

> As the above passage indicates, incantation merges with *dhyana*, which, for want of a better word, is translated 'meditation'. For this reason, silent incantation is better than vocal, being more inward.

D.: Isn't mental invocation better than oral?

B.: Oral incantation consists of sounds. The sounds arise from thoughts, for one must think before one expresses one's thoughts in words. The thoughts form the mind. Therefore mental invocation is better than oral.

D.: Shouldn't we contemplate the invocation and repeat it orally also?

B.: When the invocation becomes mental, where is the need for sound? On becoming mental, it becomes contemplation. Meditation, contemplation and mental invocation are the same. When thoughts cease to be promiscuous and one thought persists to the exclusion of all others, it is said to be contemplation. The object of invocation or meditation is

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[1] D. D., pp. 170-1.

to exclude varied thoughts and confine oneself to one thought. Then that thought too vanishes into its source, which is pure Consciousness or the Self. The mind first engages in invocation and then sinks into its own source.[1]

This is certain: worship, incantations and meditation are performed respectively with the body, the voice and the mind and in this they are of ascending order of value.

One can regard this eight-fold universe as a manifestation of God; and whatever worship is performed in it is excellent as worship of God.

The repetition aloud of His name is better than praise. Better still is its faint murmur. But the best is repetition with the mind – and that is meditation, above referred to.

Better than such broken thoughts (meditation) is its steady and continuous flow like the flow of oil or of a perennial stream.[2]

KARMA MARGA

Little need be said here about *karma marga*, the path of action, since it has been dealt with in an earlier chapter. The Maharshi discouraged unnecessary activities on the one hand and the attempt to renounce activity on the other, enjoining performance of the necessary routine activities of life in a detached manner, simultaneously with the practice of enquiry or devotion.

D.: Swami, how can the grip of the ego be loosened?

B.: By not adding new *vasanas* (innate tendencies) to it.[3]

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[1] T., 328.
[2] E. I., vv. 4-7.
[3] T., 173.

D.: How does activity help? Will it not add to the already heavy load that has to be removed?

B.: Actions performed with no thought of the ego purify the mind and help to fix it in meditation.

D.: But suppose one were to meditate incessantly without activity?

B.: Try and see. Your innate tendencies will not let you. Meditation (*dhyana*) comes only step by step with the weakening of innate tendencies by the Grace of the Guru.[1]

METHODS GRADED

Although the Maharshi recognised all methods, he graded them as more or less direct and effective, as is shown in the above quotation of verses 4 - 7 of the *Essence of Instruction*. The following exposition also makes this clear.

Examination of the ephemeral nature of external things leads to dispassion (*vairagya*). Hence enquiry is the first and most important step. When it becomes automatic, it results in indifference to wealth, fame, ease, pleasure and so on. The 'I'-thought is traced to the source of the 'I' in the Heart, which is the final goal.

However, if the aspirant is temperamentally unsuited for Self-enquiry, he must develop devotion. It may be to God or Guru or mankind in general or ethical laws or even an ideal of beauty. As any of these takes possession of him, other attachments grow weaker and dispassion develops. Attachment to the object of devotion grows until it dominates him completely, and with it grows concentration (*ekagrata*) with or without visions and direct aids.

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[1] T., 80.

If neither enquiry nor devotion appeals to him, he can gain tranquillity by breath-control. This is the way of yoga. If a man's life is in danger, all his interest centres round the one point of saving it. If the breath is held, the mind cannot afford to jump out at its beloved outer objects, and it does not do so. Therefore there is peace of mind as long as the breath is held. Since all one's attention is concentrated on the breath, other interests are abandoned. Then also, any passion results in irregular breathing. A paroxysm of joy is in fact as painful as one of grief, and both result in disturbed breathing. Real peace is happiness, and pleasures do not produce happiness.

If the aspirant is unsuited to the first two methods by temperament and to the third on account of age or health, he must try *karma marga*, the path of good deeds and social service. His nobler instincts are thus developed and he derives personal happiness from his actions. His ego becomes less assertive and its good side is enabled to develop. He thus in course of time comes to be suited for one of the three former paths. Or his intuition may be developed by *karma marga* alone.[1]

[1] T., 27.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE GOAL

D.: What is the purpose of Self-realisation?

B.: Self-realisation is the final goal and is itself the purpose.

D.: I mean, what use is it?

B.: Why do you ask about Self-realisation? Why don't you rest content with your present state? It is evident that you are discontented and your discontent will come to an end if you realise the self.[1]

The above question was seldom asked, because those who came to the Maharshi usually understood at least that the state of spiritual ignorance (or, as Christianity puts it, of 'fallen man') is undesirable and that Self-realisation is the supreme goal. In the following dialogue the purpose is asked with more understanding and therefore the answer also goes deeper.

D.: What is the goal of this process?

B.: Realising the Real.

D.: What is the nature of Reality?

B.: (*a*) Existence without beginning or end – eternal.

(*b*) Existence everywhere, endless – infinite.

(*c*) Existence underlying all forms, all changes, all forces, all matter and all spirit.

The many change and pass away, whereas the One always endures.

(*d*) The one displaces the triads such as knower, knowledge and known. The triads are only appearances in time and space, whereas the Reality

[1] T., 487.

lies beyond and behind them. They are like a mirage over the Reality. They are the result of delusion.

D.: If 'I' am also an illusion, who casts off the illusion?

B.: The 'I' casts off the illusion of 'I' and yet remains 'I'. Such is the paradox of Self-realisation. The Realised do not see any contradiction in it.[1]

> It is surprising how many philosophers and theologians have failed to understand what is implied by Self-realisation and have misrepresented and even attacked or belittled it. All that it means, as Bhagavan explains in the passage just quoted, is realising Reality, realising what is. And Reality remains the same, eternal and unchanging, whether one realises it or not. One can, of course, understand the annoyance and frustration of philosophers who wish to grasp everything with the mind on being told that Reality lies beyond and behind the triad of knower-knowledge-known, which is like a mirage over it; for obviously the mirage cannot penetrate to that which underlies it. That is why no easy answer can be given to them. Indeed, Bhagavan did not on the whole approve of questions about the meaning and nature of Realisation, because his purpose was to help the questioner and not to satisfy mental curiosity. He usually reminded people that what is needed is effort to attain Self-knowledge; and when that is attained, the questions will not arise.

Some people who come here don't ask me about themselves but about the *Jivanmukta*, liberated while still embodied. Does he see the world? Is he subject to destiny? Can one be liberated only after leaving the body or while yet alive? Should the body of a Sage resolve itself into light or disappear from sight in a miraculous way? Can one who leaves a corpse behind at death be liberated? Their questions are endless. Why worry about all these things? Does Liberation consist in knowing the answer to these questions? So I

[1] T., 28.

tell them, 'Never mind about Liberation. First find out whether there is such a thing as bondage. Examine yourself first.'[1]

> He sometimes pointed out that even to speak of Self-realisation is a delusion – an illusory escape from an illusory prison.

B.: In a sense, speaking of Self-realisation is a delusion. It is only because people have been under the delusion that the non-Self is the Self and the unreal the Real, that they have to be weaned out of it by the other delusion called Self-realisation; because actually the Self always is the Self and there is no such thing as realising it. Who is to realise what, and how, when all that exists is the Self and nothing but the Self?[2]

> One thing which impedes understanding, especially in theologians, is the contrast between Self-realisation and sainthood and the mistaken idea that it may represent a difference between various religious traditions, one striving for sainthood and another for Realisation. This idea is quite ungrounded. There have been saints in every religion, Hinduism as well as others. They differ very much among themselves, both in individual characteristics, from the rapturous to the serene, from the austere to the benign, from the subtle philosopher to the simple minded, and also in degree of attainment; some of them possess supernatural powers, some are swept away in ecstatic bliss, some consume themselves in loving service to mankind; all have a purity beyond that of ordinary men. Their state may be called heavenly even while on earth. And yet all this falls short of Self-realisation. All this is in the state of duality, where God or Self is the Other, where prayer is necessary, and revelation possible. In strict theory they are as far removed as the ordinary man from Self-realisation, since there is no common measure between the Absolute and the conditioned, the Infinite and the limited. A million is no nearer to Infinity than a hundred. This complete gulf is illustrated by the Buddhist story of the man

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[1] T., 578.
[2] D. D., p. 269.

who wanders about the earth seeking for a lost jewel which all the time is on his brow. When at last it is pointed out to him, all his years of search and wandering have done nothing to bring him nearer to it. And yet, in actual fact, if he had not gone searching he would not have found it. And in actual fact the saint can be considered nearer to Realisation than ordinary men, just as it is easier for an ordinary man to attain Realisation than for a dog, although both alike are limited to the illusion of individual being.

There are stages of attainment of the saints, just as there is a hierarchy of heavens; and both of these correspond to the degrees of initiation in indirect spiritual paths. Bhagavan would answer questions about this when specifically asked, but did not usually speak of it, since his purpose was not to raise his followers from grade to grade of apparent reality but to direct them towards the one, eternal, universal, Reality.

D.: Do we go to *Svarga* (heaven) as a result of our actions here?

B.: Heaven is as real as your present life. But if we ask who we are and discover the Self, what need is there to think of heaven?[1]

D.: Is *Vaikunta* (heaven) in the Supreme Self?

B.: Where is the Supreme Self or heaven unless in you?

D.: But heaven may appear to one involuntarily.

B.: Does this world appear voluntarily?[2]

Similarly he would briefly acknowledge grades of development in the individual but would not dwell on them.

The yogic centres counting from the bottom upwards, are a series of centres in the nervous system, each having its own kind of power or knowledge.[3]

When someone told him about a present-day saint who was said to be constantly inspired by an Incarnation of God and

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[1] T., 31.
[2] T., 385.
[3] S. D. B., xix.

to speak only as divinely directed, and he asked him whether this was true or not, he replied:

As true as all this that you see around you.

For, as compared with the Self, neither this physical world nor any higher world is inherently real, just as, compared with infinity, a big number has no more meaning than a small one.

A saint may attain a lofty grade without even conceiving of the ultimate Reality of Oneness or having only brief ecstatic intimations of it. That does not matter; the power of his purity and aspiration will eventually sweep him onwards either in this life or beyond.

For one who envisages the ultimate Goal and strives towards it there are no stages; either he is realised or he is not. About this Bhagavan spoke willingly and explicitly, because this was the path he enjoined.

There are no stages in Realisation or *Mukti*. There are no degrees of Liberation.[1]

D.: There must be stage after stage of progress before attaining the Absolute. Are there different levels of Reality?

B.: There are no levels of Reality; there are only levels of experience for the individual, not of Reality. If anything can be gained which was not there before, it can also be lost, whereas the Absolute is eternal, here and now.[2]

However, although there are no stages of Self-realisation there are what might be called 'previews', glimpses which are not yet stabilised or made permanent. Sometimes, indeed, these occur to people who, in this lifetime, have had no spiritual training at all. As the opacity of the aspirant's ego lessens with training in abnegation he becomes more liable to them. Even great mystic philosophers such as Plotinus or Meister Eckhart have, by their

[1] D. D., p. 102.
[2] T., 132.

> own admission, been dependent on them, not having attained to the permanent state of identity from which Bhagavan taught.

Can a man become a high official merely by seeing one? He may become one only if he strives and equips himself for the position. Similarly, can the ego, which is in bondage as the mind, become the Divine Self simply because it has once glimpsed that it is the Self? Is this not impossible without the destruction of the mind? Can a beggar become a king by merely visiting a king and declaring himself to be one?[1]

D.: Can Self-realisation be lost again after once being attained?

B.: Realisation takes time to steady itself. The Self is certainly within the direct experience of everyone but not in the way people imagine. One can only say that it is as it is. Just as incantations or other devices can prevent fire from burning a man when otherwise it would do so, so *vasanas* (inherent tendencies impelling one to desire one thing and to shun another) can veil the Self when otherwise it would be apparent. Owing to the fluctuations of the *vasanas*, Realisation takes time to steady itself. Spasmodic Realisation is not enough to prevent re-birth, but it cannot become permanent as long as there are *vasanas*. In the presence of a great master, *vasanas* cease to be active and the mind becomes still so that *samadhi* (absorption in Realisation) results, just as in the presence of various devices fire does not burn. Thus the disciple gains true knowledge and right experience in the presence of a master. But if this is to be established further effort is necessary. Then he will know it to be his real Being and thus be liberated while still living.[2]

> Some arm-chair critics have claimed that the quest of Self-realisation is arrogant or presumptuous or does not involve the humility and self-effacement of sainthood. If, instead of

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[1] S. E., 37.
[2] T., 141.

> theorising, they undertook the eradication of the *vasanas*, which are the roots of the ego, they would soon see. Actually it is beyond both arrogance and humility, beyond all pairs of opposites; it is simply what is. It involves not merely the humbling of the ego but its complete dissolution.

You are the Self even now, but you confuse your present consciousness or ego with the Absolute Consciousness or Self. This false identification is due to ignorance, and ignorance disappears together with the ego. Killing the ego is the only thing to be done. Realisation already exists; no attempt need be made to attain it. For it is not anything external or new to be acquired. It is always and everywhere – here and now, too.[1]

D.: This method seems to be quicker than the usual one of cultivating the virtues alleged to be necessary for Realisation.

B.: Yes. All vices centre round the ego. When the ego is gone Realisation results naturally.[2]

> Having spoken of the saint and the mystic philosopher, mention should also be made of the occultist, that is the person who seeks Realisation for the sake of the supernatural powers it may bring. This Bhagavan always discouraged. Realisation may bring powers with it, as the higher includes the lower, but desire for powers will impede Realisation, as the quest for the lower state negates the higher. If the objective is the endowment of the ego with new powers, how can it at the same time be the liquidation of the ego? Such a person has not understood what Realisation means.

D.: What are the powers of supermen?

B.: Whether the powers are high or low, whether of the mind or what you call the supermind, they exist only with reference to him who possesses them. Find out who that is.[3]

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[1] T., 174.
[2] T., 146.
[3] D. D., p. 269.

B.: He that would abide in the Self should never swerve from his one-pointed attention to the Self or the pure Being that He is. If he slips or swerves away from that state, several kinds of vision conjured up by the mind may be seen; but one should not be misled by such visions – which may be of light or space – nor by the *nada* or subtle sounds that may be heard, nor by the visions of a personified God, seen either within oneself or outwardly, as if they had an objective reality. One should not mistake any of these things for the Reality. When the principle of intellection by which these visions and so on are cognised or perceived is itself false or illusory, how can the objects thus cognised, much less the visions perceived, be real?[1]

There are some foolish persons who, not realising that they themselves are moved by the Divine Power, seek to attain all supernatural power of action. They are like the lame man who said: 'I can dispose of the enemy if some one will hold me up on my legs.'

Since peace of mind is permanent in Liberation, how can they who yoke their mind to powers – which are unattainable except through the activity of the mind – become merged in the Bliss of Liberation which subdues the agitation of the mind?[2]

D.: Can a yogi know his past lives?

B.: Do you know the present life so well that you wish to know the past? Find the present, then the rest will follow. Even with your present limited knowledge, you suffer much. Why should you burden yourself with more knowledge? Is it so as to suffer more?

D.: Does Bhagavan use occult powers to make others realise the Self or is the mere fact of Bhagavan's Realisation enough for that?

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[1] S. I., Chap. II, § 16.
[2] F. V. S., 15 & 16.

B.: The spiritual force of Realisation is far more powerful than the use of all occult powers. Inasmuch as there is no ego in the Sage there are no 'others' for him. What is the highest benefit that can be conferred on you? It is happiness, and happiness is born of peace. Peace can reign only where there is no disturbance, and disturbance, is due to thoughts that arise in the mind. When the mind is itself absent, there will be perfect peace. Unless a person has annihilated the mind, he cannot gain peace and be happy. And unless he himself is happy, he cannot bestow happiness on 'others'. Since, however, there are no 'others' for the Sage, who has no mind, the mere fact of his Self-realisation is itself enough to make the 'others' happy too.[1]

When asked if occult powers (*siddhis*) can be achieved with the divine state (*Isvaratva*) as mentioned in the last verse of *Dakshinamurthi Stotra*, the Maharshi said:

'Let the divine state be achieved first, and then the other questions may be raised'.[2]

No powers can extend into Self-realisation, so how can they extend beyond it? People who desire powers are not content with their idea of Pure Consciousness. They are inclined to neglect the supreme happiness of Realisation for the sake of powers. In search of these they follow by-lanes instead of the highroad and so risk losing their way. In order to guide them aright and keep them on the highroad, they are told that powers accompany Realisation. In fact Realisation comprises everything and the Realised Man will not waste a thought on powers. Let people first get Realisation and then seek powers if they still want to.[3]

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[1] M. G., p. 30.
[2] T., 7.
[3] T., 57.

Powers may accrue before or after attaining Realisation, or they may not, according to the nature of the person, but they are not to be valued or sought after, nor is their absence or the absence of visions or other such experiences to be taken as a cause for discouragement on the path.

D.: Is it not necessary or at least advantageous to render the body invisible in one's spiritual progress?

B.: Why do you think of that? Are you the body?

D.: No, but advanced spirituality must effect a change in the body, mustn't it?

B.: What change do you desire in the body, and why?

D.: Isn't invisibility evidence of advanced wisdom (*Jnana*)?

B.: In that case all those who spoke and wrote and passed their lives in the sight of others must be considered ignorant (*ajnanis*).

D.: But the sages Vasishta and Valmiki possessed such powers.

B.: It may have been their destiny (*prarabdha*) to develop such powers (*siddhis*) side by side with their wisdom (*jnana*). Why should you aim at that which is not essential but is apt to prove a hindrance to wisdom (*jnana*)? Does the Sage (*jnani*) feel oppressed by his body being visible?

D.: No.

B.: A hypnotist can suddenly render himself invisible. Is he therefore a Sage?

D.: No.

B.: Visibility and invisibility refer to him who sees. Who is that? Solve that question first. Other questions are unimportant.[1]

An American visitor was discouraged at having attained no powers.

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[1] T., 30.

D.: I have been interesting myself in meta-physics for over twenty years, but I have not gained any novel experiences as so many others claim to. I have no powers of clairvoyance, clairaudience, and so on. I feel locked up in this body, nothing more.

B.: That is all right. Reality is only one and that is the Self. All other things are mere phenomena in it, of it and by it. Seer, sight and seen are all the Self only. Can any one see or hear without the Self? What difference does it make if you see or hear any one close up or at a great distance? The organs of sight and hearing are needed in both cases. So is the mind. None of them can be dispensed with. In either case you are dependent on them. Why then should there be any glamour about clairvoyance or clairaudience? Moreover, what is acquired will also be lost in due course. It can never be permanent. The only permanent thing is Reality and that is the Self. You say, 'I am', 'I am going', 'I am speaking', 'I am working', and so on. Hyphenate the 'I-am' in all of them. Thus: 'I-AM'. That is the abiding and fundamental Reality. This truth was taught by God to Moses: 'I-AM that I-AM'; 'Be still and know that I-AM GOD', so 'I-AM' is God.[1]

> From what has been said up to here it will be seen that Self-Realisation is the most simple and natural thing, in fact the only simple and natural thing, simply the state of being that which is, and yet it is a state most rare, unknown to the saints, glimpsed briefly by the mystics. 'Among thousands there is perhaps one who strives to be perfect. Among thousands who strive to be perfect there is perhaps one who knows Me as I-am'. (*Bhagavad Gita*, VII-3). Unfortunately it is a sign of our times that attainment of this supreme state is falsely claimed for many. The aspirant needs to discriminate.

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[1] T., 503.

> Once attained, the Supreme State must be the same by whatever path and whatever religion it was approached, being, by its very nature, beyond differentiation.

Once attained, the state of Self-realisation is the same by whatever path and in whatever religion it may be approached. There are three aspects of God, according to one's approach to Realisation. They are: *Sat* (Being), *Chit* (Consciousness), *Ananda* (Bliss).

The aspect of Being is emphasised by *jnanis* who are said to repose in the Essence of Being after incessant search and to have their individuality lost in the Supreme.

The Consciousness aspect is approached by yogis who exert themselves to control their breath in order to steady the mind and are then said to see the Glory (Consciousness of Being) of God as the one Light radiating in all directions.

The Beatitude aspect is approached by devotees who become intoxicated with the nectar of love of God and lose themselves in Blissful experience. Unwilling to leave this, they remain for ever merged in God.

The four *margas, Karma, Bhakti, Yoga* and *Jnana* are not exclusive of one another. They are described separately in classical works only to convey an idea of the appropriate aspect of God to appeal readily to the aspirant according to his predisposition.[1]

> Experience of Realisation is known as *samadhi*. It is often supposed that *samadhi* implies trance, but that is not necessarily so. It is also possible to be in a state of *samadhi* while retaining full possession of human faculties. In fact, a Self-realised Sage such as the Maharshi dwells permanently in this state. Even the pre-glimpses of Realisation spoken of earlier do not necessarily imply trance.

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[1] From the editorial commentary on *Five Stanzas to Sri Arunachala.*

The sannyasi visitor, Swami Lokesananda, asked about *samadhi*:

B.: 1. Holding on to Reality is *samadhi*.
2. Holding on to samadhi with effort is *savikalpa samadhi*.
3. Merging in Reality and remaining unaware of the world is *nirvikalpa samadhi*.
4. Merging in ignorance and remaining unaware of the world is sleep.
5. Remaining in the primal, pure, natural state without effort is *sahaja nirvikalpa samadhi*.[1]

Sleep	Kevala	Sahaja
1. mind alive	1. mind alive	1. mind dead
2. sunk in oblivion	2. sunk in light	2. resolved into the Self.
	3. like a bucket with a rope left lying in the water in the well.	3. like a river discharged into the ocean and its identity lost.
	4. to be drawn out by the other end of the rope.	4. a river cannot be redirected from the ocean.[2]

The old gentleman asked Bhagavan whether it was not necessary to go through *nirvikalpa samadhi* first before attaining to *sahaja samadhi*. Bhagavan replied: 'When we have tendencies

[1] T., 391.
[2] T., 187.

that we are trying to give up, that is to say when we are still imperfect and have to make conscious efforts to keep the mind one-pointed or free from thought, the thoughtless state which we thus attain is *nirvikalpa samadhi*. When, through practice, we are always in that state, not going into *samadhi* and coming out again, that is the *sahaja* state. In the *sahaja* state one sees only the Self and one sees the world as a form assumed by the Self.[1]

> The question of the nature of *samadhi* brings with it the question of activity. Uselessly trying to imagine what *samadhi* is or what Realisation implies, instead of striving to attain it, people form theories as to whether the Realised man can be active or not.

D.: Can a man who has attained Realisation move about and act and speak?

B.: Why not? Do you suppose Realisation means being inert like a stone, or becoming nothing?

D.: I don't know, but they say that the highest state is withdrawal from all sense activities, thoughts and experiences; in fact; cessation of activity.

B.: Then how would it differ from deep sleep? Besides, it would be a state which, however exalted, comes and goes and would therefore not be the natural and normal state, so how could it represent the eternal presence of the Supreme Self, which persists through all states, and survives them? It is true that there is such a state and that in the case of some people it may be necessary to go through it. It may be a temporary phase of the quest or it may persist to the end of a man's life, if it be the Divine Will or the man's destiny, but in any case, you cannot call it the highest state. If it were, you would have to say that not only

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[1] D. D., p. 56.

the Sages, but God Himself has not attained the highest state, since not only are the Realised Sages very active but the Personal God (*Isvara*) himself is obviously not in this supremely inactive state, since He presides over the world and directs its activities.[1]

D.: What is *samadhi*?

B.: In yoga the term is used to indicate some kind of trance and there are various kinds of *samadhi*. But the *samadhi* I speak to you about is different. It is *sahaja samadhi*. In this state you remain calm and composed during activity. You realise that you are moved by the deeper Real Self within and are unaffected by what you do or say or think. You have no worries, anxieties or cares, for you realise that there is nothing that belongs to you as ego and that everything is being done by something with which you are in conscious union.[2]

> After Realisation, a man may continue a life of worldly activity or he may not; it makes no difference to his state.

A visitor said: Realised men generally withdraw from active life and abstain from worldly activity.

B.: They may or they may not. Some, even after Realisation, carry on trade or business or rule a kingdom. Some withdraw to solitary places and abstain from all activity more than the minimum necessary to keep life in the body. We cannot make any general rule about it.[3]

> Inability to understand the apparent inactivity of the Sage is one of the difficulties of many Western writers. Firmly convinced that Christ was mistaken in saying that Mary had chosen the better part, modern Christians are apt to represent

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[1] S. D. B., x.
[2] S. D. B., xi.
[3] D. D., p. 86.

Martha, the outwardly active one, as superior and to criticise the Sage for what they consider inaction.

When asked by an aspirant whether his Realisation, if attained, would help others, Bhagavan has been known to reply:

Yes, and it is the best help you possibly can give them.

But then he added:

'But in fact there are no others to help.'[1]

The same paradox is proclaimed in Buddhism where, for instance in the Diamond Sutra, after speaking of compassion, the Buddha explains that in reality there are no others to be compassionate to. The Lord Buddha continued: "Do not think, Subhuti, that the Tathagata (*i.e.,* the Buddha) would consider within himself: I will deliver human beings. That would be a degrading thought. Why? Because there are really no sentient beings to be delivered by the Tathagata. Should there be any sentient beings to be delivered by the Tathagata, it would mean that the Tathagata was cherishing within his mind arbitrary conceptions of phenomena such as one's own self, other selves, living beings and a universal self. Even when the Tathagata refers to himself, he is not holding within his mind any such arbitrary thought. Only terrestrial human beings think of selfhood as being a personal possession. Subhuti, even the expression 'terrestrial beings' as used by the Tathagata does not mean that there are any such beings. It is only used as a figure of speech."*

People often say that a Realised Man should go about preaching his message. They ask how a man can remain quiet in Realisation when there is misery also existing. But what is a Realised Man? Does he see misery outside himself? They want to determine his state without themselves realising it. From his

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1 M.G., p. 24.

* From *A Buddhist Bible* by Dwight Goddard, quoted in *Buddhism and Christianity in the light of Hinduism* by Arthur Osborne, p. 114.

standpoint their contention amounts to this: a man has a dream in which he sees a number of persons. On waking up he asks, 'Have the people in the dream also woken up?' It is ridiculous! Again, some good man says, 'It does not matter even if I don't get Realisation. Let me be the last man in the world to get it so that I can help all the others to become Realised before I do.' That is just like the dreamer saying: 'Let all these people in the dream wake up before I do.' He would be no more absurd than this amiable philosopher.[1]

> And yet, paradoxically, the Sage is intensely active, although he may apparently be inactive.

A saying of Laotse from the *Tao Te Ch'ing* was read out in the hall: 'By his non-action, the Sage governs all.' Sri Bhagavan remarked: 'Non-action is unceasing activity. The Sage is characterised by eternal and incessant activity. His stillness is like the apparent stillness of a fast rotating top. It is moving too fast for the eye to see, so it appears to be still. Yet it is rotating. So is the apparent inaction of the Sage. This has to be explained because people generally mistake his stillness for inertness. It is not so.[2]

> Similar to this preoccupation with action was the question of whether the Realised Man is bound by destiny. Really the question has no meaning. His body is bound by destiny but, since he does not identify himself with the body, its destiny cannot bind him. Being one with the Eternal Self within which this body, his life, this world, passes like an appearance; he cannot be bound by anything.

This morning a visitor said to Bhagavan: 'The Realised Man has no *karma*; he is not bound by destiny, so why should he still retain a body?'

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[1] T., 498.
[2] T., 599.

B.: Who asks this question – a Realised Man or an unrealised man? Why worry about what the Realised Man does or why he does anything? Better think about yourself.

He was then silent. After a while, however, he explained further, 'You are under the impression that you are the body, so you think the Realised Man also has a body. Does he say that he has one? He may seem to you to have one, and to do things with it, as others do. The charred ashes of a rope look like a rope but they are of no use to tie anything with. So long as one identifies oneself with the body, all this is hard to understand. That is why it is sometimes said in answer to such questions that the body of the Realised Man continues to exist until his destiny has worked itself out, and then it falls away. An example of this that is sometimes given is that an arrow which has been loosed from the bow (destiny) must continue its course and hit the mark, even though the animal that stood there has moved away and another has taken its place (*i.e.,* Realisation has been achieved). But the truth is that the Realised Man has transcended all destiny and is bound neither by the body nor by its destiny.[1]

> Equally beside the point is the question of whether the Realised Man can feel pain or pleasure (if pleasure, then pain also, because the two go together; they are a pair of opposites).

The sensation is common both to the Realised Man and the unrealised Man. The difference is that the unrealised man identifies himself with the body that feels it, whereas the Realised Man knows that all this is Self, all this is Brahman. If there is pain, let it be; it is also a part of the Self and the Self is perfect.[2]

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[1] D. D., pp. 341-2.
[2] T., 383.

> Or whether he can commit sins. The very raising of this question implies failure to understand what is meant by 'Self-Realisation'. Sin is the action of the ego or the individual being in its own interests against the universal harmony or the Will of God. But where there is no ego, where there is only the Universal Self, who is to act against whom?

An unrealised man sees one who is Realised and identifies him with the body. Because he does not know the Self and mistakes the body for the Self, he extends the same mistake to the body of the Realised Man. The latter is therefore considered to be the physical form. Again, the unrealised man, though in fact not the originator of his actions, imagines himself to be so, and he considers the actions of the body as his own actions, and therefore he thinks that the Realised Man is acting in the same way, because his body is active. But the latter knows the truth and is not deceived. His state cannot be understood by the unrealised and therefore the question of his actions troubles the latter although it does not arise for himself.[1]

All good or divine qualities are included in *Jnana* (spiritual Enlightenment) and all bad or satanic qualities in *ajnana* (spiritual darkness). When *jnana* comes all *ajnana* goes, so that all divine qualities come automatically. If a man is a *jnani* he cannot utter lies or commit any sin.[2]

> The saying that there is no ego or that the mind is dead sometimes leads to misunderstandings. What is meant is simply that the mind or ego as apparent creator or originator of policies, plans and ideas, is dead. Understanding remains, and pure radiant Consciousness.

D.: Can we think without the mind?

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[1] T., 499.
[2] D. D., p. 276.

B.: Thoughts can continue like other activities. They do not disturb the Supreme Consciousness.[1]

People surmise the existence of the pure mind in the *jivanmukta* and the personal God. They ask how he could otherwise live and act. But this is only a concession to argument. The pure mind is in fact Absolute Consciousness. The object to be witnessed and the witness finally merge together and Absolute Consciousness alone remains. It is not a state of blank or ignorance but it is the Supreme Self.[2]

> The mind of the Realised Man is sometimes compared to the moon in daytime.

The moon shines by reflecting the light of the sun. When the sun has set, the moon is useful for displaying objects. When the sun has risen, no one needs the moon, although its disc is visible in the sky. So it is with the mind and the Heart. The mind is made useful by its reflected light. It is used for seeing objects. When turned inwards, it merges into the source of illumination which shines by itself and the mind is then like the moon in daytime.[3]

> Sometimes people expressed fear at the thought of giving up the ego, but Bhagavan reminded them that they do so every time they go to sleep.

People are afraid that when the ego or the mind is killed, the result may be a mere blank and not happiness. What really happens is that the thinker, the object of thought and thinking all merge in the one Source which is Consciousness and Bliss itself, and thus that state is neither inert nor blank. I don't

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[1] T., 43.
[2] T., 68.
[3] M. G., p. 12.

understand why people should be afraid of a state in which all thoughts cease to exist and the mind is killed. They daily experience it in sleep. There is no mind or thought in sleep. Yet when one rises from sleep one says, 'I slept well'.[1]

> Moreover, in sleep they surrender the ego in order to lapse into a mere blank, whereas Realisation is merging into pure Consciousness which is the uttermost Bliss.

In answer to a visitor, Bhagavan made the following remark: You can have, or rather you will yourself be, the highest imaginable kind of happiness. All other kinds of happiness which you have spoken of as 'pleasure', 'joy', 'happiness', 'bliss', are only reflections of the *Ananda* which, in your true nature, you are.[2]

> It is impossible to describe *samadhi* since it transcends the mind. It can only be experienced.

An American lady asked Bhagavan what his experiences of *samadhi* were. When it was suggested that she should relate her experiences and ask if they were right, she replied that Sri Bhagavan's experiences ought to be correct and should be known whereas her own were unimportant. She wanted to know whether Sri Bhagavan felt his body hot or cold in *samadhi*, whether he spent the first three and a half years of his stay in Tiruvannamalai in prayer, and so on.

B.: *Samadhi* transcends mind and speech and cannot be described. The state of deep sleep cannot be described; the state of *samadhi* even less.

D.: But I know that I was unconscious in deep sleep.

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[1] D. D., pp. 76-7.
[2] D. D., p. 231.

B.: Consciousness and unconsciousness are modes of the mind. *Samadhi* transcends the mind.

D.: Still, you can tell me what it is like.

B.: You will know only when you are in *samadhi*.[1]

Sometimes he referred to the cinema screen as an illustration.

D.: If the Realised and the unrealised alike perceive the world, where is the difference between them?

B.: When the Realised Man sees the world, he sees the Self that is the substratum of all that is seen. Whether the unrealised man sees the world or not, he is ignorant of his true being, the Self. Take the example of a film on a cinema screen. What is there in front of you before the film begins? Only the screen. On that screen you see the entire show, and to all appearances the pictures are real. But go and try to take hold of them and what do you take hold of? The screen on which the pictures appear so real. After the play, when the pictures disappear, what remains? The screen again. So it is with the Self. That alone exists; the pictures come and go. If you hold on to the Self, you will not be deceived by the appearance of the pictures. Nor does it matter at all whether the pictures appear or disappear.[2]

Once permanent, unwavering *sahaja samadhi* has been obtained, this is the state of *Mukti* or Liberation. People speak of *jivanmukti* and *videhamukti*, that is Liberation while still living and Liberation after death, but Bhagavan explained that the difference is only from the point of view of the observer; to the Realised Man himself it makes no difference whether he wears a body or not.

Mr. Bannerjee asked Bhagavan what is the difference between *jivanmukti* and *videhamukti*.

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[1] T., 110.

[2] M. G., p. 47.

B.: There is no difference. For those who ask it is said that a Realised Man with a body is a *jivanmukta* and that he attains *videhamukti* when he sheds the body, but this difference exists only for the onlooker, not for him. His state is the same before shedding the body, and after. We think of him as a human form or as in that form, but he knows that he is the Self, the One Reality, both inner and outer, which is not bound by any form. There is a verse in the *Bhagavata* (Bhagavan here quoted the verse in Tamil) which says that just as a drunken man does not notice whether he is wearing his shawl or whether it has fallen off, so the Realised Man is hardly aware of his body and it makes no difference to him whether it remains or drops off.[1]

There are no stages in Realisation or *Mukti*. There are no degrees of Liberation. So there cannot be one stage of Liberation with the body and another when the body has been shed. The Realised Man knows that he is the Self and that nothing, neither his body nor anything else, exists but the Self. To such a one what difference could the presence or absence of a body make?[2]

> Sometimes Realisation is called *Turiya*, the 'Fourth State', because it underlies the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep.

When I entered the hall Bhagavan was answering some questions and was saying: 'There is no difference between the dream, and waking states except that the former is short and the latter long. Both are the product of the mind. Because the waking state lasts longer we imagine it to be our real state; but actually our real state is what is sometimes called the Fourth State, which is always as it is, and is unaffected by waking, dream or sleep.

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[1] D. D., p. 101.
[2] D. D., p. 102.

Because we call these three 'states' we call that a state also; however, it is really just the natural state of the Self. A 'fourth' state would imply something relative, whereas this is transcendent.[1]

In truth, there is no bondage.

Our real nature is Liberation, but we imagine that we are bound and we make strenuous efforts to get free, although all the while we are free. This is understood only when we reach that state. Then we shall be surprised to find that we were frantically striving to attain something that we always were and are. An illustration will make this clear. A man goes to sleep in this hall. He dreams he has gone on a world-tour and is travelling over hill and dale, forest and plain, desert and sea, across various continents, and after many years of weary and strenuous travel, he returns to this country, reaches Tiruvannamalai, enters the Ashram and walks into the hall. Just at that moment he wakes up and finds that he has not moved at all but has been sleeping where he lay down. He has not returned after great efforts to this hall, but was here all the time. It is exactly like that. If it is asked why, being free, we imagine ourselves bound, I answer, 'why, being in the hall, did you imagine you were on a world-tour, crossing hill and dale, desert and sea?' It is all mind or maya.[2]

8. Under whatever name and form one may worship the Absolute Reality, it is only a means for Realising it which is without name and form. That alone is true Realisation, wherein one knows oneself in relation to that Reality, attains peace and realises one's identity with it.

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[1] D. D., p. 92.
[2] D. D., pp. 93-4.

9. The duality of subject and object, the trinity of seer, sight and seen, can exist only if supported by the One. If one turns inwards in search of that One Reality, they fall away. Those who see this are those who see Wisdom. They are never in doubt.

21. What is the truth of the scriptures which declare that if one sees the Self, one sees God? How can one see one's Self? If, since one is a single being, one cannot see one's Self, how can one see God? Only by becoming a prey to Him.

22. The Divine gives light to the mind and shines within it. Except by turning the mind inward and fixing it in the Divine, there is no other way to know Him through the mind.

30. If one enquires 'Who am I?' within the mind, the individual 'I' falls down abashed as soon as one reaches the Heart and immediately Reality manifests itself spontaneously as 'I-I'. Although it reveals itself as the 'I', it is not the ego but the Perfect Being, the Absolute Self.

31. For him who is immersed in the Bliss of the Self, arising from the extinction of the ego, what remains to be accomplished? He is not aware of anything other than the Self. Who can comprehend his state?

32. Although the scriptures proclaim 'Thou art That', is only a sign of weakness of mind to meditate, 'I am That, not this', because you are eternally That. What has to be done is to investigate what one really is and remain as That.

33. It is ridiculous either to say 'I have not realised the Self' or 'I have realised the Self'; are there two selves for one to be the object of the other's realisation? It is a truth within the experience of everyone that there is only one Self.

34. It is due to illusion born of ignorance that men fail to recognise That which is always and for everybody the inherent Reality dwelling in its natural Heart-centre and to abide in it,

and that instead they argue that it exists or it does not exist, that it has form or does not have form, or is non-dual or dual.

35. To seek and abide in the Reality that is always attained is the only Attainment. All other attainments (*siddhis*) are such as are acquired in dreams. Can they that are established in the Reality and are free from maya, be deluded by them?

38. As long as a man is the doer, he also reaps the fruits of his deeds, but as soon as he realises the Self through enquiry as to who is the doer, his sense of being the doer falls away and the triple karma is ended. This is the state of eternal Liberation.

39. Only so long as one considers oneself bound, do thoughts of bondage and Liberation continue. When one enquires 'who is bound?' the Self is realised, eternally attained, eternally free. When thoughts of bondage comes to an end, can thoughts of Liberation survive?

40. If it is said that Liberation is of three kinds, with form, without form, or with and without form, then let me tell you that the extinction of the ego that asks which form of Liberation is true, is the only true Liberation.

(F. V.)

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DAY BY DAY WITH BHAGAVAN

From the Diary of

A. DEVARAJA MUDALIAR

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PREFACE

A word as to the origin of this work may not be out of place. It was my great good fortune to live for more than four years, from August 1942 till the end of 1946, at Sri Ramanasramam and to have the inestimable benefit of daily contact with our Bhagavan. After I had been there for some months various people who visited the Asramam began to suggest that it would be a good thing if I recorded Bhagavan's utterances on spiritual topics, either in answer to questions from visitors or in any other context. For a long time, however, I was too lazy to make the effort. Nevertheless, whenever I read the 'Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa', as I used to now and then, I felt how desirable it was that a similar book should be compiled in the case of our Bhagavan. When I had drifted on like this for some years, on the morning of January 1st, 1945, within the space of about an hour, three different persons — a lawyer's clerk, son of Sankara Ammal doing service in the Asramam, a businessman of Madras by name M.V.P. Sastri, whom I had known since his boyhood at Chittoor, and O.P. Ramaswami Reddi, who later became Chief Minister of Madras — all urged me to undertake the task as, in their kind opinion, I was best fitted for it besides having the necessary facility of constant close contact with Bhagavan.

The appeal coming from such widely different persons on the first day of the year and all of them approaching me in such quick succession and without any previous consultation amongst themselves made such a deep impression on me that I took it as a call really from Bhagavan. So, that very day I started keeping an Asramam Diary. My idea was to preserve for Bhagavan's devotees all that took place in the Asramam

that might be of interest or importance from one point of view or another, and mainly Bhagavan's answers to questions addressed to him by visitors from all quarters of the globe, for many of whom I acted as a sort of official translator in Bhagavan's Court.

I told Bhagavan of the circumstances under which I started the work, thus asking for his blessing on it. Then I obtained permission from the *Sarvadhikari*. Also, for the first few days I read out to Bhagavan whatever I had recorded so that he could correct me anywhere where I had gone wrong. Even when I was interpreting Bhagavan to visitors, if I made the slightest mistake Bhagavan would pull me up. Whenever I myself was in doubt as to what Bhagavan meant I used to ask for further clarification and Bhagavan willingly explained things again for my benefit. After the first two or three days I gave up reading my entries to Bhagavan daily, but on any day when I was in doubt whether I had accurately recorded what Bhagavan had said, I used to read out my entry for the day and correct it wherever he indicated that it was necessary.

Only a part of these records of mine seems to be available to the Asramam authorities for publication just now. I am glad that at least so much is to be published by them immediately. I believe they came into existence because Bhagavan willed it and I believe it is his will that at least a part of them should now appear in print. I hope and pray to Bhagavan that the publication may prove not merely of interest but of great use to those who read it and that he may bestow his grace on all who go through it in earnestness and faith.

1st January 1952 A. DEVARAJA MUDALIAR

Day by Day with Bhagavan

16-3-45 Morning

A visitor: Should I give up my business and take to reading books on Vedanta?

Bhagavan: If the objects have an independent existence, *i.e.*, if they exist anywhere apart from you, then it may be possible for you to go away from them. But they don't exist apart from you; they owe their existence to you, your thought. So, where can you go, to escape them? As for reading books on Vedanta, you may go on reading any number of them. They can only tell you, 'Realise the Self within you'. The Self cannot be found in books. You have to find it out for yourself, in yourself.

Evening

Almost the same question was put by another visitor in the afternoon and Bhagavan said, "Where can you go, fleeing from the world or objects? They are like the shadow of a man, which the man cannot flee from. There is a funny story of a man who wanted to bury his shadow. He dug a deep pit and, seeing his shadow at the bottom, was glad he could bury it so deep. He went on filling the pit and when he had completely filled it up he was surprised and disappointed to find the shadow on top. Even so, the objects or thoughts of them will be with you always, till you realise the Self."

17-3-45 Afternoon

Mr. T.P. Ramachandra Aiyar asked Bhagavan about the meaning of *ஆர் ஒளி* in the stanza of '*உள்ளது நாற்பது*' (*Reality in Forty Verses*).

B: *ஆர் ஒளி* means *நிறைந்த ஒளி*. It refers to that light of *manas* in which we see all the world, both the known and the unknown of the world. There is first the white light, so to call it, of the Self, which transcends both light and darkness. In it no object can be seen. There is neither seer nor seen. Then there is total darkness or *avidya* in which also no objects are seen. But from the Self proceeds a reflected light, the light of pure *manas*, and it is this light which gives room for the existence of all the film of the world which is seen neither in total light nor in total darkness, but only in the subdued or reflected light. It is this light which is referred to in the stanza.

18-3-45

On or about 15-3-45 Bhagavan had asked someone in the hall to read aloud *Bhakta Vijayam*, to illustrate from the story of Tulasi Das, how one totally immersed in sensual life, suddenly recoils and goes to the other extreme of a highly religious life. In the story, Tulasi Das runs away from wife and home and is mad after Hari at Banaras. The wife and mother go and entreat him to come back, reminding him of his great love for them all. He takes no notice of them at all, but asks them, "Has my Hari come? Yes. He is coming there!" etc. He was mad after Hari alone and took interest in nothing else. When this portion was being read out, Bhagavan said, "I was somewhat like this at Madura. Going to school, books in hand, I would be eagerly desiring and expecting that God would suddenly appear before me in the sky; and so I would be looking up at the sky. What sort of progress could such a one make in his studies at school!"

[This was apparently shortly before he left Madura. I have never heard before, either from Bhagavan or from others, that he was so God-mad at Madura. So I record it here.]

19-3-45 Morning

A visitor from Sind, very probably Kundanlal A. Mahatani of Hyderabad, Sind, (now Pakistan) asked: "It is said the world and the objects that we see are all unreal, like the snake in the rope. It is also stated in other places that the seer and the seen are the same. If the seer and the seen are same, then how can we say that the seen is unreal?"

B.: All that is meant is that the seen regarded as an independent entity, independent of the Self, is unreal. The seen is not different from the seer. What exists is the one Self, not a seer and a seen. The seen regarded as the Self is real.

V.: It is said the world is like a dream. But there is this difference between dream and the waking state. In dream I see my friends or relations and go through some experiences with them. When I wake up and ask those friends or relations whom I met in the dream about the dream, they know nothing about it. But in the waking state what I see and hear is corroborated by so many others.

B.: You should not mix up the dream and the waking states. Just as you seek corroboration about the waking state experiences from those whom you see in the waking state, you must ask for corroboration about the dream experiences from those whom you saw in the dream state, *i.e*., when you were in the dream. Then in the dream, those friends or relations whom you saw in the dream would corroborate you.

The main point is, are you prepared when awake to affirm the reality of any of your dream experiences? Similarly, one who has awakened into *jnana* cannot affirm the reality of the waking experience. From his viewpoint, the waking state is dream.

V.: It is said only some are chosen for Self-realisation and those alone could get it. It is rather discouraging.

B.: All that is meant is, we cannot by our own *buddhi*, unaided by God's grace, achieve realisation of Self.

I added, "Bhagavan also says that even that grace does not come arbitrarily, but because one deserves it by one's own efforts either in this or in previous lives."

V.: Human effort is declared to be useless. What incentive can any man then have to better himself?

I asked, "Where is it said you should make no effort or that your effort is useless?"

The visitor thereupon showed the portion in *Who am I?* where it is said, "When there is one great Force looking after all the world, why should we bother what we shall do?" I pointed out that what is deprecated there is not human effort, but the feeling that "I am the doer". Bhagavan approved of my explanation, when I asked him if it was not so.

Afternoon

Bhagavan said he once had a dream that he went to Palni and that he then devoured the Palni God (Lord Subramanya); and that he had at another time a dream that he visited Tiruchendur temple (where also the deity is Lord Subramanya). The details of this dream Bhagavan does not remember.

I remembered that some people once wanted to know if a *jivanmukta* can have dreams. The doubt is natural, because we believe *jnanis* have no sleep like ordinary men. So they may not have dreams. I therefore asked Bhagavan about this matter, and he said, "If the *jnani* can have a waking state, what is the difficulty about his having a dream state? But of course as his waking state is different from the ordinary man's waking state, so his dream state also will be different from the ordinary man's dream state. Whether in waking or in dream he will not slip from his real state which is sometimes called the fourth or *turiya* state."

24-3-45 Afternoon

I was reading *Vichara Sangraha* (*Self Enquiry*). I came across the statement that something in the heart *நான் நான் என்று ஸ்புரித்துக் கொண்டிருக்கிறது, i.e.*, something is shining or sounding as 'I-I' in the heart. I have always had doubt what exactly the word *sphurana* means. So I asked Bhagavan and he said, "It means '*விளங்குவது* or *விளக்குவது*' *i.e.*, which shines or illuminates." I asked, "Is it not a sound we hear?" Bhagavan said, "Yes, we may say it is a sound we *feel* or *become* aware *of*". He also referred to the dictionary and said, "The word means 'throbbing', 'springing on the memory', 'flashing across the mind'. Thus both sound and light may be implied in the word *sphurana*. Everything has come from light and sound."

I asked Bhagavan what it is that 'shines', whether it is the ego or the Self. He said it was neither the one, nor the other, but something in between the two, that it is something which is a combination of the 'I' (Self) and the 'I-thought' (ego), and that the Self is without even this *sphurana*.

Explaining how the Self is mere light and how it is both the word or sound and also that out of which word or sound originally came, Bhagavan said, "Man has three bodies, the gross one made of the five elements, the *sukshma* or subtle one made of *manas* and *prana*, and the *jiva*. Similarly even *Iswara* has three bodies. All the manifested universe is His gross body, light and sound are His *sukshma* body, and the Self His *jiva*."

25-3-45 Afternoon

One P. Sri Krishniah of Peddapalayam, near Tenali, came to the Asramam on the 22nd and started reading with Bhagavan's permission a small work on the life of Dhanurdasa (*பிள்ளை உறங்கா வில்லி சரித்திரம்*),

composed by him in Telugu verse and dedicated to Bhagavan. The dedication is both humorous and touching, the poem being regarded as a virgin offered to Bhagavan for marriage, as *kanyadana* is considered the best gift. He seems to have written the dedication first and later composed the work. Thus he chose his son-in-law before he begot his daughter and in the end of his dedication he says, "You have already wedded *mukti*. Please take this girl of mine also and treat her kindly and well, correcting her faults and ignoring her weaknesses. I cannot ask you to go over to our house, though you have become my son-in-law, as so many Rajahs and others are always coming to you here for your *darshan*." He also says, "By this marriage of my *vaishnava* daughter to Bhagavan, *advaita* and *visishtadvaita* have become wedded."

He read the dedication once again on the 25th afternoon and also read out his parting or farewell song of which the following is a free translation: "For men like us, various desires often occur. Some get fulfilled, others not. Here all my desires got their satisfaction. One of my desires was to compose a life of Dhanurdasa in verse, another was to come here in company with my friends and relations and to offer the hand of my girl (the poem) to you, a third was to eat to my satisfaction in your company at the above marriage feast, a fourth was to stay here a few days and feast my eyes on a sight of you. All these together I got, by virtue of your grace. Please give me leave to depart. Oh, one of pure life! What magic have you stored in this form of yours, that those who have seen it become entranced? What power have you instilled in this air, that it is able to ward off all distress? What drug have you mixed in the water of this place that it is able to subdue all ailments? What powder of enchantment have you spread over these premises that those who come here feel reluctant to depart? You alone can know your greatness. However long we may remain, the feet will not

move to depart from here. What can I do? Please grant me leave to depart, *purushottama* (best among men)."

31-3-45

One night, a few days ago, after supper, when Bhagavan was resting on his cot in the verandah, east of his hall, something funny took place. He was facing south. Chadwick was sitting behind Bhagavan's back. Soon after Bhagavan took his seat and leaned on the cushions, Chadwick from behind stealthily and unnoticed fanned Bhagavan. When Bhagavan turned and looked, Chadwick withdrew the fan and remained still. When Bhagavan turned his face south, Chadwick resumed fanning again. Bhagavan turned round and Chadwick stopped. Bhagavan was left wondering how he got the breeze. Chadwick then laughed out and Bhagavan joined in the laughter. This shows how even with such an eminent Master a devotee can play and both can enjoy the joke like children.

Afternoon

It seems a visitor, the Raja of Sivaghar in U.P., told Bhagavan that he had surrendered himself to Bhagavan and Bhagavan should give him *jnana*. Bhagavan referred to an article on Nama Dev's insistence on the importance of the Lord's name, in the September 1937 issue of *Vision*, where it is pointed out that only when the 'I', the ego, is surrendered the significance of the Lord's name will be realized. When I entered the hall the story of how *Ashtavakra Gita* came to be taught was being recounted in English, for the benefit of the above Raja and other visitors. After the story was read out, Bhagavan said, "Because *Brahma jnana* is not something external, which is somewhere far away where you can go and get it, you cannot say that it will take so long or so short a time to attain it. It is always with you. You are That! The story of *Ashtavakra Gita* is intended to teach that for getting *Brahma jnana* all that is necessary is to

surrender yourself completely to the guru, to surrender your notion of 'I' and 'mine'. If these are surrendered, what remains is the Reality. Then, it becomes impossible to state what further time it would take to attain *Brahma jnana*. It would be wrong to state that it takes as much time as a man would require to put his other foot into the second stirrup after having placed one foot in the first stirrup. The moment when ego is completely surrendered, the Self shines."

Proceeding, Bhagavan quoted the last two lines of the following stanza from *Yoga Vasishta*: "*நானெனும் பொருள்கா ணுதோர் ஞானவா காயங் காணுர். நானெனும் பொருளைக் கண்டோர் ஞானவா காய மாவார்; நானெனு மகங்காரங்கள் ஞானவிண் மதியைமூடி ஞனெம் பரம வாம்ப னன்மலர் விரியாதன்றே.*" which state that unless the cloud of the 'I' or 'ego-sense' which covers the moon of the Divine consciousness (*chidakasa*) is removed, the lily of the heart which knows nothing of the sense of 'I' (*ahankara*) will not open out in full bloom.

Bhagavan also added, "We have to contend against age-long *samskaras*. They will all go. Only, they go comparatively soon in the case of those who have already made *sadhana* in the past, and late in the case of the others." In this connection I asked, "Do these *samskaras* go gradually or will they suddenly disappear one day? I ask this, because though I have remained fairly long here I do not perceive any gradual change in me." Bhagavan asked, "When the sun rises, does the darkness go gradually or all at once?"

Another visitor asked, "How to conquer passions?" Bhagavan said, "If the passions are something external to us we can take arms and ammunition and conquer them. They all come from within us. If, by looking into the source whence they issue, we see that they don't come out of us, we shall conquer them. It is the world and the objects in it that arouse our passions. But the world and these objects are only created by our mind. They don't exist during our sleep."

After all this talk Bhagavan drank a little water from his *kamandalam* and turning to his attendant enquired whether he had already drunk some water (*i.e.*, after he returned to the hall about 3-30 P.M.). The attendant said 'yes', and thereupon Bhagavan said he had forgotten it, and to make sure he drank some again. He further added, almost in an unguarded moment, as he rarely gives expression to such experiences of his, that sometimes he does not even know whether it is morning, mid-day or evening and has to look at the clock and try to remember before he knows what time of day it is. On one occasion, he has told me that he scratched his skin, where there was eczema once, as we scratch during sleep. And once when I was concerned over some physical pain of his, he told me he feels that pain '*கனக்கண்டாற்போல்*', *i.e.*, it was a passing and faint experience like that in a dream. These are clues to the sort of life Bhagavan leads in our midst, seeming to act and move and feel as we do, but really living in a world of his own where the things we experience don't exist.

5-6-45 Afternoon

Myself, Harindranath Chattopadhyaya, G.V. Subbaramayya and T. P. Ramachandra Aiyar were sitting in the front row just opposite Bhagavan in the hall and G.V.S. said to H.C. "I recently came across a typed copy of some of your verses made at Aurobindo Ashram, with Sri Aurobindo's notes on the margin highly commending some verses." Thereupon H.C. told Bhagavan, "I stayed at Aurobindo's Ashram for two years and I then made about 4000 sonnets and a poem of 50,000 lines plus other poetry." Apparently the fact that H.C. had been at Aurobindo's Ashram before for two years was news to Bhagavan, though it was not to some of us. This is the third visit of H.C. to Bhagavan. H.C. then gave us a recitation of two of his earliest poems and one out of those made at Pondicherry. They are given below. Bhagavan enjoyed the recitation.

THE EARTHEN GOBLET

(A conversation between the poet and the goblet)

"O silent goblet! red from head to heel,
How did you feel
When you were being twirled
Upon the Potter's wheel
Before the Potter gave you to the world?"
I felt a conscious impulse in my clay
To break away
From the great Potter's hand
That burned so warm.
I felt a vast
Feeling of sorrow to be cast
Into my present form.
Before that fatal hour
That saw me captive on the Potter's wheel
And cast into this crimson goblet-sleep,
I used to feel
The fragrant friendship of a little flower
Whose root was in my bosom buried deep.
The Potter has drawn out the living breath of me,
And given me a form which is the death of me;
My past unshapely natural state was best,
With just one flower flaming through my breast.

PITCHERS OF CLAY

Outside the Potter's shop upon the way
In patient rows we stand, pitchers of clay —
Under a copper-clouded sky of gold
Expecting every moment to be sold.

Although we have no language, yet we feel
A bitterness towards the Potter's wheel

Which moulded us, what though without a flaw,
To shape, which is against our being's law.

Pitchers are beautiful and yet, indeed,
Even from beauty we would all be freed
And, slipping into Earth, secure escape
From the enchanted tyranny of shape.

Some of us pitchers, tired of being, drop
And break to pieces in the Potter's shop.
Pathetic things! What does the Potter care
For the pale weariness of Earthenware?

SHAPER SHAPED

In days gone by I used to be
A potter who would feel
His fingers mould the yielding clay
To patterns on his wheel;
But now, through wisdom lately won,
That pride has died away,
I have ceased to be the potter
And have learned to be the clay.

In other days I used to be
A poet through whose pen
Innumerable songs would come
To win the hearts of men;
But now, through new-got knowledge
Which I hadn't had so long,
I have ceased to be the poet
And have learned to be the song.

I was a fashioner of swords,
In days that now are gone,
Which on a hundred battle-fields
Glittered and gleamed and shone;

But now that I am brimming with
The silence of the Lord
I have ceased to be a sword-maker
And learned to be the sword.

In by-gone days I used to be
A dreamer who would hurl
On every side an insolence
Of emerald and pearl.
But now that I am kneeling
At the feet of the Supreme
I have ceased to be the dreamer
And have learned to be the dream.

———

After this I asked H.C. to recite before Bhagavan (or rather act as on the stage) a piece from a play of his in which a dock-labourer groaning under his work bursts out into a complaint. H.C. did so and all saw how moving a good recitation can be. After a while H.C. asked Bhagavan, "How is it, Bhagavan, we sometimes feel choked with tears in Bhagavan's Presence?" Bhagavan smiled and kept quiet. I said, "It is a good thing if one's tears gush forth like that and even of Bhagavan it is recorded that when he used to go and stand before the image in the temple at Madura, before he came here, tears used to flow involuntarily out of his eyes, not as the result of any joy or pain, but purely out of *bhakti*." Bhagavan was thereupon kind enough to add, "Even after coming here such a thing has happened. Even on reading or hearing touching passages from books such a thing has happened. Apparently a stock of emotional tears is latent in so many of us, so that at any opportune moment, or on the slightest provocation, they well out without any control on our part." Then Bhagavan narrated, very dramatically as is usual with him, an incident which occurred when he was about 22 and living in the Virupakshi Cave. It seems he was sitting on a rock near the cave and a boy of about 8 or 10 years came there,

looked at Bhagavan and, not being able to bear the sight of such a young and bright person taking to such a hard life of penance, was so moved to compassion that he started to sob and sobbed violently for some time. Bhagavan said, "Who could say what was the reason for his sobbing and why tears flowed out of him merely at his seeing me?" Bhagavan continued in a reminiscent mood later in the day and added that another boy, also about 8 or 10 years old, met Bhagavan another day in his Virupakshi cave days and took such pity on Bhagavan that the following conversation took place between them. Bhagavan was sitting on a rock near the cave, all alone, and the boy came and met him there.

Boy: Why are you here, all alone, like this?

Bhagavan: I had some trouble at home and so have come away like this.

Boy: Then how about your food?

Bhagavan: I eat if anybody gives me anything to eat.

Boy: I have a good master. I shall take you to him. First, you may have to volunteer your services free. If he approves of your work, he will give you three pies a day and gradually he will increase it to six pies, and so on.

Bhagavan: Yes, please do so.

Bhagavan added, "There was no doubt that the boy was very much concerned over what he considered my sad plight and that he was moved by great and genuine pity."

Bhagavan also recalled the incident in which an old Harijan woman, one day about noon time, accosted Bhagavan on one of his rambles on the rough jungle path down the hill and remarked, "*உன்னைப் பாடையிலே வைக்க! ஒரே இடத்திலே சிவனே யென்று இருக்கக்கூடாதா?*". ("A curse on you! Why can't you stay quiet in a place?")

Bhagavan said, "Yes, this is very good advice," and also slapped his own cheeks, as if in punishment for not having known what the woman taught then.

Relating the above incident, Bhagavan said that, when first the old woman began abusing him, he could not understand how he deserved it and was dumbfounded as to what offence he could have given to the woman.

This made Mr. T.S. Rajagopal recall an article by one Miss Souris in a Telugu journal called *Bharati*. For the benefit of Harindranath Chattopadhyaya and some others who were new to it, Bhagavan again related the incident to the merriment of all of us.

Bhagavan said, "One day the Mauni brought the *tapals* (post) as usual. I left the papers and magazines on the couch and was looking at the letters. After showing the *tapals* to me, Mauni left the hall and took the *Bharati* number with him, saying he would read it and bring it back. After a little time he came back, left the magazine on my couch and was going out. While near the door, he suddenly said, 'What a thief is Bhagavan!' and before I could ask why he said so, he had gone. I was wondering what I could have done to have made the Mauni reproach me like that. It sort of rankled in my mind. And only after I read the article in the *Bharati* and came to the very last sentence in it, which was 'Oh, what a thief is Bhagavan!' I could understand the joke."

23-8-45 Morning 10 a.m.

Mr. Kundanlal Mahatani, of Karachi, who has been staying here for about eight months, asked Bhagavan for direct *upadesa*, urging that all the books emphasise that nothing can be achieved by anybody except with the help of *upadesa* from a guru and that though he has read all the directions given by Bhagavan for Self-enquiry and attaining stillness of mind

where God can be realised as 'I', he still did not know what was the best method for him individually. This was not the first time he had made such a request. At least twice before, once in June and again in July, he had done so. Neither then nor now did Bhagavan make any reply. The gentleman was very much dejected and was worried whether he was not fit to receive any reply and whether he had committed any offence on account of which Bhagavan was not pleased to reply.

Later in the day, in the evening, Bhagavan in connection with some other matter, referred to a Tamil poem, and to look at a translation of it, Mr. Mahatani borrowed my note book on 24-8-45. As often happens to devotees, who indirectly receive necessary instructions, Mr. Mahatani found in the note book instructions which suited him. Further, on 25-8-45 about 2 p.m., when he was having a nap he had a vision in his dream in which Bhagavan appeared and quoted a Sanskrit *sloka* and interpreted it as meaning, 'There is no better karma or *bhakti* than enquiry into the Self'. He was greatly delighted and later in the same dream another devotee put the same question to Bhagavan and Mahatani repeated the above answer to him and laughed heartily. All this was reported to Bhagavan on the 25th by Mahatani.

8-9-45 Morning

Mr. Subba Rao of Bezwada asked Bhagavan, "What is the difference between imagination and vision?"

Bhagavan: One is voluntary and the other is not. But in the ultimate analysis, though not in the immediate present, even vision must have had its origin in the voluntary sphere.

Subba Rao: As dreams have their origin there?

B: Yes.

Another Visitor: It is said that our waking life is also a dream, similar to our dream during sleep. But in our dreams

we make no conscious effort to get rid of the dream and to awake, but the dream itself comes to an end without any effort on our part and we become awake. Similarly why should not the waking state, which is in reality only another sort of dream, come to an end of its own accord, and without any effort on our part, and land us in *jnana* or real awakening?

B: Your thinking that you have to make an effort to get rid of this dream of the waking state and your making efforts to attain *jnana* or real awakening are all parts of the dream. When you attain *jnana* you will see there was neither the dream during sleep, nor the waking state, but only yourself and your real state.

I pressed Bhagavan, "But what is the answer to the question? Why should not the waking state also pass like our dreams without any effort on our part and land us in *jnana*, as a dream passes off and leaves us awake?"

B: Who can say that the dream passed off of its own accord? If the dream came on, as is generally supposed, as the result of our past thoughts or karma, probably the same karma also decides how long it should last and how after that time it should cease.

I was still unsatisfied and, as the result of further talk with Bhagavan, I feel that the waking state, though a sort of dream, is clearly distinct from the dream during sleep in this, namely that during dream it never occurs to us that it is a dream, whereas in the waking state we are able to argue and understand from books and gurus and from some phenomena that it may be only dream after all. Because of this, it may be our duty to make an effort to wake into *jnana*. Bhagavan says that we don't deem a dream, a dream till we wake up, that the dream looks quite real while it lasts; and that similarly this waking state will not appear a dream till we wake up into *jnana*. Still, it seems to me that, because of the above difference between the dream and the waking states, our effort is called for.

14-9-45

Three or four days ago Mr. Desai, Retired Sub-Judge, asked Bhagavan (with reference to what is said in *Ramana Gita*), "How to direct the *prana* or life-current into the *sushumna nadi*, so that as stated in *Ramana Gita* we could achieve the severance of the *chit-jada granthi*?" Bhagavan said, "By enquiring 'Who am I?'"

"The yogi may be definitely aiming at rousing the *kundalini* and sending it up the *sushumna*. The *jnani* may not be having this as his object. But both achieve the same result, that of sending the Life-force up the *sushumna* and severing the *chit-jada granthi*. *Kundalini* is only another name for *atma* or Self or *sakti*. We talk of it as being inside the body, because we conceive ourselves as limited by this body. But it is in reality both inside and outside, being no other than Self or the *sakti* of Self."

Desai: How to churn up the *nadis*, so that the *kundalini* may go up the *sushumna*?

Bhagavan: Though the *yogi* may have his methods of breath-control, *pranayama*, *mudras*, etc., for this object, the *jnani's* method is only that of enquiry. When by this method the mind is merged in the Self, the Self, its *sakti* or *kundalini*, rises automatically.

The next day a visitor asked Bhagavan, with reference to the words *dhimahi* in the *gayatri*, "What is the idea meant? I am not able rightly to grasp it."

B: The words only mean fixing the *aham* in the Self, though literally they mean, "We meditate".

Visitor: I am not able to form a conception of the '*Tat*' or the Self. Then, how am I to fix the *aham* in the *Tat*.

B: Why should you bother to conceive the *Tat* which you don't know? Try to find out the 'I' that you know, what it is and whence it arises. That is enough.

16-9-45 Afternoon

A visitor asked, "What should one, who is an absolute beginner, do in this (*i.e*., spiritual) line?"

Bhagavan: The very fact that you put this question shows you know what to do. It is because you feel the want of peace, that you are anxious to take some steps to secure peace. Because I have a little pain in my foot, I am applying this ointment.

Visitor: What is the method to be adopted for securing peace?

B: The conception that there is a goal and a path to it, is wrong. We are the goal or peace always. To get rid of the notion that we are not peace is all that is required.

V: All books say that the guidance of a Guru is necessary.

B: The Guru will say only what I am saying now. He will not give you anything you have not already. It is impossible for anyone to get what he has not got already. Even if he gets any such thing, it will go as it came. What comes will also go. What always is will alone remain. The Guru cannot give you anything new, which you have not already. Removal of the notion that we have not realised the Self is all that is required. We are always the Self. Only, we don't realise it.

The Asramam compounder asked some questions about his experiences during meditation. Bhagavan explained that the Self is the one reality that always exists and it is by its light all other things are seen. We forget it and concentrate on the appearances. The light in the hall burns, both when persons are present there and when they are absent, both when persons are enacting something as in a theatre and when nothing is being enacted. It is the light which enabled us to see the hall, the persons and the acting. We are so engrossed with the objects or appearances revealed by the light that we pay no attention to the light. In the waking state or dream state, in which things appear, and in the sleep state, in which we see nothing, there is always

the light of consciousness or Self, like the hall-lamp always burning. The thing to do is to concentrate on the seer and not on the seen, not on the objects, but on the Light which reveals them.

18-9-45 Afternoon

A group of Bengalis have come. One of them has recently lost a child. He put the question to Bhagavan, "Why did that child die so young? Is it his karma or our karma that we should have this grief?"

Bhagavan: The *prarabdha* which the child had to work out in this life was over and so it passed away. So we may call it the child's karma. So far as you are concerned, it is open to you not to grieve over it, but to remain calm and unaffected by it, being convinced that the child was not yours but always only God's, that God gave and God took away. And in this connection Bhagavan took out the *Yoga Vasishta* in English to refer to the story of Punya and Pavana. Strange to say, when he casually opened the book, it actually opened at the story he had in mind. And from the book he asked me to read out the portion where Punya advises his brother Pavana not to grieve foolishly over the death of their parents, pointing out that Pavana had had innumerable births in the past, in each one of which he had a number of relations and that exactly as he is not mourning for the death of all those relations now, he should not now mourn for the death of their father either.

The visitor asked, "When a person dies while yet a child and another lives long, which of them is the greater sinner?"

B: I cannot say.

I told the visitor that the data he had given could not by themselves enable anyone to judge which was the greater sinner.

Visitor: If a person lives long, he has greater chances of perfecting steps to reach realisation.

B: The person dying young may soon be reborn and have in that life better chances of striving towards realisation than the other person living long in this life.

A visitor asked, "When it is said that we must renounce all activities, is it meant that we should reduce our activities as much as possible?"

B: By giving up activities is meant giving up attachment to activities or the fruits thereof, giving up the notion 'I am the doer'. The activities for going through which this body has come, will have to be gone through. There is no question of giving up such activities, whatever one may or may not like.

27-9-45

Bhagavan suddenly seems to have felt like visiting Skandasramam, where for about a week now repairs are being done; and so without notice to anybody, after the midday meal, Bhagavan, on his usual after-lunch stroll, wended his way towards Skandasramam, followed by attendant Rangaswami. Few knew of this till about 3-30 p.m. But after 3-30 the news gradually spread and almost all the devotees went up to Skandasramam and found Bhagavan seated on the terraced platform in front, which overlooks the temple and town. We found Bhagavan in very good spirits and relating various events and incidents that happened during his stay there previous to his coming to Ramanasramam. Bhagavan had a mind even to continue stopping there and to spend the night there. But all the devotees had thronged there and none looked likely to move till Bhagavan moved. So at about 5-30 p.m. Bhagavan started, looked at the various parts of the Asramam, telling us where he used to sleep, where he used to sit, and where mother sat, where they cooked, where the old tap was, and so on, and then got down by the steps. On the way he visited Virupakshi Cave and explained about his life there also. Here he pointed out the மாடத்துப் பிள்ளையார்

மாடம் the niche, which is now a small window on the wall facing east in the verandah in front of the cave. மாடத்துப் பிள்ளையார் (*i.e.*, Ganesa in the niche) is an expression occurring in two stanzas, one composed by Iswara Swami and another composed by Bhagavan in praise of a Ganesa image placed in that niche at the time Bhagavan was staying in Virupakshi Cave. Some *sannyasi* who seems to have been living in that cave for some days now brought water from the well nearby and Bhagavan drank it with pleasure. Then Bhagavan left the cave for Ramanasramam, slowly wending his way down the steps. At the foot we all sat with him under a *pipal* tree around which there is a platform, close to Guha Namasivaya's Cave. Satakopa Naidu of Bangalore brought some பொரி (puffed rice) and groundnuts. All the crowd sat there with Bhagavan and enjoyed this picnic. By this time it was getting dark, and we all started along the hill track leading to the town through Guha Namasivaya's Cave and along the main road, and reached the Asramam about 8-30 p.m.

It was a marvel that Bhagavan did this trip all on foot in this way, the more so because his left big toe had become either dislocated or badly sprained on 26-8-45, and as a result thereof is still having some pain there.

Since Bhagavan left Skandasramam, he had gone there two or three times within about a year or two after his settling down here. But after that, *i.e.*, for nearly twenty-two years now, he has never gone there till today. Bhagavan was in great spirits and all the way down from Skandasramam to Ramanasramam he stopped once every few yards and related various incidents and made remarks about some trees having disappeared in the interval and about some cracks in the Virupakshi Cave, about the place where Jadaswami rolled stones down on Bhagavan (though Bhagavan would have it, it was all only in fun), and about the heavy rain and storm that came on one night and displaced huge boulders and created a spring for the convenience of Bhagavan and his followers.

6-10-45

It was reported to Bhagavan that somehow under cover of the leaves, two mangoes had escaped the notice of the monkeys and had grown to quite a big size and that they were discovered today, and that one was taken away by the monkeys and the other left behind. This made Bhagavan think of the expression '*இலை மறைவு*' (under cover of leaves) and by association of ideas he thought of a stanza in '*பிரபுலிங்க லீலை*' (*Prabhulinga Lila*), the 9th in '*மருள சங்கர தேவர் கதி*' and read out to us a few stanzas, where it is related that once Marula Sankara was living like a madman near the place where leaf-plates, after eating, were thrown away in front of a mutt. Neither the head of the mutt nor the disciples knew anything about this man. But when Allama Prabhu went that way, Marula got up and prostrated himself at his feet and Allama Prabhu in turn took him up and embraced him. For, each knew the other's worth. Only a *jnani* can recognise a *jnani*. One who indulges in *kriya, charya,* or yoga can be recognised by these activities which he goes through. But in the case of a *jnani* there is no such external thing by which we can recognise him.

I note this incident, the more particularly because some who come here also sometimes have found it difficult to recognise Bhagavan's worth and have even asked me, "What is there about this Bhagavan of yours which makes you think he is a great man or a realised soul? He eats and sleeps and does everything else like us."

8-10-45 Afternoon

Janaki, daughter of Mr. A. Subbarayadu, the Deputy Superintendent of Police of this place, asked Bhagavan, "I want to do *nama smarana* always. But I am also keen on getting higher education. (She is in the first year College class). What should I do?".

Bhagavan: There is nothing contradictory between the two desires.

Janaki: If I am always doing *nama smarana*, how can I carry on studies for which the mind is required?

Bhagavan did not answer. But Frydman and I told the girl, "It was said both could be done at the same time." Frydman added, "Give the mind to studies and the heart to God."

9-10-45 Afternoon

Mr. K. Mahatani asked in continuation of the above, "If we want to succeed in any enterprise in the world, we must give our whole mind and heart to it. Otherwise we cannot succeed. So it is rather impracticable to devote one's mind both to God and worldly activity."

Bhagavan: If one keeps fixed in the Self, the activities will still go on and their success will not be affected. One should not have the idea that one is the doer. The activities will still go on. That force, by whatever name you may call it, which brought the body into existence will see to it that the activities which this body is meant to go through are brought about.

Mr. Mahatani was still not quite satisfied and thereupon Bhagavan referred him to read an article on renunciation which is found at the end of the Gita Press edition of *Bhagavad Gita*. This article mentions seven stages of renunciation and Bhagavan said, "Let Mr. Mahatani see if anything in this article appeals to him". I read out the whole article in the hall for the benefit of all, as Bhagavan desired. It is said there that one who has reached the seventh stage of renunciation will not feel even when his body is cut by a weapon or some other suffering is inflicted on him. When this portion was being read Bhagavan remembered the following poem.

வஞ்சகர் வேல்கொடு மார்பி னெறியினு
மெஞ்ச வேதழன் மூடி யெரியினு
நஞ்சி னுரழ னுக நலியினு
மஞ்சி டாரது வானந்த மாவதே.

(*i.e.*, They won't be afraid even if guileful enemies stab their chest or they are surrounded by fire or bitten by a cobra, all will be bliss for them). This is found in Ponnambala Swami's commentary on *Bhagavad Gita* in Tamil stanzas, Chapter VI Verse 17 (Page 150 of the Asramam book). Continuing this topic, I said, "It is true such things are said in the books. But we see that the *jnani* feels pain. Even one like Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa felt pain when he had cancer of the throat and cried out, 'Why has mother sent this pain to me?'"

Bhagavan: It may be like that in the beginning, due to long association or habit. But afterwards it will pass off.

In this connection I must record that long ago, once when Bhagavan was suffering from some illness and I expressed concern, Bhagavan was pleased to explain to me that he felt the pain as in a dream and no more.

10-10-45 Morning

I came across the following on pages 110 and 111 in *Letters to my friends* by Gilbert Henry Gedge in the September 1945 issue of *Science of Thought Review*.

"Again, people sometimes say that when they are at work there is no time to be thinking about God; their mind has to be 'on the job'.

"Now, friend, I say to you once again that for all these different matters the remedy is the same. Seek first the kingdom of God. When that is done all things fall into their proper place and their proper perspective in our mind. God is in you and in all your circumstances now, and you and your own individual little world are in God now. Realisation of that fact involves also the realisation that all things in your life are in their right place and order, that the law of God rules your whole life and circumstances. Nothing whatever can be excluded from the rule of that law when we realise that our life is actually lived in God. Even when we are engaged in

our daily work it helps to think of God, to recognise His presence with us, within and around us and in our job. It helps even more to see the job as God's work, for when we do so, we find new and better ways of doing it and are blessed in the doing."

I read this out to Bhagavan and he approved of it and even asked me to show it to Mr. Mahatani as bearing on last evening's discourse.

11-10-45 Morning

Mr. G.V. Subbaramayya arrived. Just then Bhagavan was reading a Telugu translation of his preface to *Dakshinamurti Stotra* in Tamil. A few days ago Mr. P.C. Desai brought to Bhagavan's notice a Gujarati book on *Dakshinamurti Stotra*, written by himself. And in connection with it Bhagavan asked me to make for Mr. P.C. Desai's benefit an English translation of Bhagavan's Tamil preface to the *Stotra*. This led Smt. Nagamma to make a Telugu translation. Reading and explaining the above Telugu translation, Bhagavan told Mr. G.V. Subbaramayya practically all that he had told Mr. P.C. Desai before. The gist of it is this: "Dakshinamurti, *i.e.*, the great Siva himself could not express the truth of the one Reality except by silence. But that silence could not be understood except by the very advanced. The others have to be told. And yet how is one to say in words that which God himself could not express? Sankara therefore advises the method of praising Dakshinamurti and with that as the ostensible object really seeks to explain that all is Brahman. In the first four stanzas he explains the nature of the world, since what prevents our knowing the reality is the world and if its (*i.e.*, world's) nature is understood, the obstacle in the way of realising truth will be removed. In the next four stanzas he explains the nature of the *jiva*. Then he explains the connection between the two and teaches that all is Self. Trying to explain the scheme and gist of Sankara's *Dakshinamurti Stotra*, I wrote the above brief preface."

18-10-45 Morning

A visitor from the Punjab asked Bhagavan, "When I meditate I feel a certain bliss at times. On such occasions, should I ask myself 'Who is it that experiences this bliss'?"

Bhagavan: If it is the real bliss of the Self that is experienced, *i.e*., if the mind has merged really in the Self, such a doubt will not arise at all. The question itself shows real bliss was not reached.

All doubts will cease only when the doubter and his source have been found. There is no use removing doubts. If we clear one doubt, another doubt will arise and there will be no end of doubts. But if the doubter is found to be really non-existent, by seeking for the source of the doubter, then all doubts will cease.

Visitor: Sometimes I hear internal sounds. What should I do when such things happen?

Bhagavan: Whatever may happen, keep up the enquiry into the Self, asking 'Who hears these sounds?' till the reality is reached.

A second edition of *Sri Ramana, the Sage of Arunagiri* by Aksharajna has recently come out. Sampling it here and there, I came across the passage that Bhagavan blesses his disciples in various ways, the mild by sight, the middling by thought and the advanced by touch. Once when I was reading *Kaivalyam* in Tamil I asked Bhagavan, "Many books speak of Gurus blessing disciples or giving *diksha* by touching the head of the disciple with their hands or feet. How is it then Bhagavan never does any such thing?" Bhagavan then told me, "It is true the books mention the three ways of *diksha*, *viz*., by sight, touch and thought. But *diksha* by thought is really the best." So I asked Bhagavan today about the above passage in Aksharajna's book, saying, "He also knew Bhagavan well. He must have had some reason for saying so." Bhagavan said, "I don't know," and added, "I might have touched some by accident or for other reasons, not with the intention of

giving *diksha*." In this connection, I may record on the authority of Mr. G.V. Subbaramayya (who was present when the incident occurred) that some years ago, an old, venerable and distinguished-looking ascetic from North India was staying in the Asramam for about a month, that he used to repeat the entire *Bhagavad Gita* and that on the day of his departure Bhagavan touched him in the following circumstances:

Bhagavan returned to the hall after his morning stroll and sat on the couch. While his feet were still touching the ground, the above ascetic fell at Bhagavan's feet, his head almost touching Bhagavan's feet and prayed that Bhagavan should bless him with *diksha* by touch, adding he would not get up till Bhagavan did so. Bhagavan thereupon was pleased to put one of his hands on the old man's head and lifted him with the other hand.

While all this talk was going on, Dr. Srinivasa Rao was massaging Bhagavan's feet which had some rheumatic trouble. Bhagavan humorously remarked, "Doctor is now giving *diksha* to me by touch." About 15 days ago, when the Doctor was massaging Bhagavan's feet, Bhagavan asked him to stop, saying, "What you have done is enough. You may go and sit down. I shall do some massaging myself and get some *punya*. Why should you alone have all the *punya*?" and began massaging himself. (*punya* is spiritual merit earned, for example, by service to a Master).

19-10-45 Morning

A barrister from Bombay asked Bhagavan, "I have read the works of Bhagavan and others and, though I can understand them intellectually, I have not been able to realise anything in experience. I have tried Bhagavan's method for about six years and yet I have not made any progress. When I meditate, other thoughts come. For people like me, living in cities and doing our work and coming here only occasionally, what *sadhana*

would Bhagavan advise so that we may succeed better than I have so far been able to do?"

Bhagavan: Your real nature is always there, your meditation, etc., come only temporarily. Reality being your Self, there is nothing for you to realise. All that is required is that you should give up regarding the unreal as real, which is what all are doing. The object of all meditation, *dhyana* or *japa* is only that, to give up all thoughts regarding the not-self, to give up many thoughts and to keep to the one thought.

As for *sadhana*, there are many methods. You may do *vichara*, asking yourself 'Who am I?' or, if that does not appeal to you, you may do *dhyana* 'I am Brahman' or otherwise, or you may concentrate on a *mantra* or name in *japa*. The object is to make the mind one-pointed, to concentrate it on one thought and thus exclude our many thoughts, and if we do this, eventually even the one thought will go and the mind will get extinguished in its source.

Visitor: In actual practice I find I am not able to succeed in my efforts. Unless Bhagavan's grace descends on me I cannot succeed.

Bhagavan: Guru's grace is always there. You imagine it is something, somewhere high up in the sky, far away, and has to descend. It is really inside you, in your heart, and the moment (by any of the methods) you effect subsidence or merger of the mind into its source, the grace rushes forth, spouting as from a spring, from within you.

Another visitor asked, "What is the reality of this world?"

Bhagavan: If you know your reality first, you will be able to know the reality of the world. It is a strange thing that most people do not care to know about their own reality, but are very anxious to know about the reality of the world.

You realise your own Self first and then see if the world exists independently of you and is able to come and assert before you its reality or existence.

Another visitor asked, "Why is there so much pain even for the innocent, such as children for instance? How is it to be explained? With reference to previous births or otherwise?"

Bhagavan: As about the world, if you know your own reality, these questions won't arise. All these differences, the pains and miseries of the innocent, as you say, do they exist independently of you? It is you that see these things and ask about them. If by the enquiry 'Who am I'? you understand the seer, all problems about the seen will be completely solved.

Dr. Syed asked, "If a person prays for a spiritual good for say two years and yet is not answered, what should he do?"

Bhagavan: It may be it is for his good that the prayer is not granted.

Afternoon

Bhagavan related the following: "When my uncle Nelliappa Aiyar came to see me I was in the Mango *tope* (grove) near Gurumoortham. The direct and shortest route to that place from the Railway station lay through a place where a Swami (மாமரத்துச்சாமி) was living. My uncle, meeting that Swami, and in his anxiety (because I had come away directly from my schoolboy life and so could hardly know anything about religion or spiritual truths), enquired of the above Swami whether I really knew anything in the path on which I had entered. The Swami told my uncle that I knew nothing, but was sitting with eyes closed in a firm and obstinate manner, doing some sort of *hatha yoga*. So my uncle, who had a notion that none could know anything of value in spiritual life without reading Vedanta *sastras*, had a very poor opinion of me and felt only pity for me. Later, when I was in Virupakshi Cave, one day I was explaining the fourth stanza in *Dakshinamurti Stotra* to a young man who used

to come to me frequently and who had requested me to explain the *Stotra*. In those days I was still generally silent and people thought I was observing *mauna*. My uncle suddenly appeared on the scene and I was caught in the act of explaining the *Stotra*. I was taken aback and for a moment hesitated whether I should continue the talk or observe *mauna*. But, seeing my uncle had already learnt that I did not mind talking, I continued the discourse. This convinced my uncle that I knew a great deal which he thought I could not have known." Bhagavan added, "The Swami who informed my uncle first that I knew nothing had also to change his opinion. This is how it happened. One day, returning from my *pradakshina* round the hill, I entered the Easanya Mutt and there I found this Swami. He showed the *Vivekachudamani* and asked me about some stanza there. When I explained it, quoting other portions from the same book and also other books, he completely changed his estimate of me."

I may also record here, since it does not seem to have been recorded so far, that Bhagavan told us that when his uncle came and had to send a written message to Bhagavan before he could get admittance, the poor gentleman had no ink or pen and wrote his message on a piece of paper with some twig for pen and the juice of prickly-pear fruit for ink.

26-10-45 Morning

Bhagavan told me that one morning, when he was sitting on the verandah in Virupakshi Cave, the words *கருணையாலென்னை யாண்ட நீ* came to him very insistently, but he took no special notice of them. It seems the same thing happened the following morning also. Then Bhagavan composed the first stanza of '*அருணசல பதிகம்*' (Eleven Verses on Arunachala). The next morning the words beginning the second stanza similarly came to him and he composed the second stanza; and so it went on every day, until the last two stanzas were composed on one day. On that day, after composing the two last

stanzas Bhagavan, it seems, started for *giripradakshina* (going round the hill). One of his disciples, Aiyaswami, brought a piece of paper and pencil and told another disciple who was going with Bhagavan, "Bhagavan has been composing one stanza every morning for some days now, and today he has composed two stanzas. More may come to him today. In case they do, have this paper and pencil with you, so that the same may be recorded." And on the way round the hill Bhagavan actually composed the first six stanzas of the *Arunachala Ashtakam* (Eight Verses on Arunachala). It seems Echamma first got the '*அக்ஷர மணமாலை*' (*The Marital Garland of Letters*) published and later Narayana Reddi. This Narayana Reddi came to know of the *Padhikam* and *Ashtakam* soon afterwards, and wanted to publish them. Then Bhagavan composed two more stanzas for completing the *Ashtakam*; and the *Padhikam* and *Ashtakam* were published by Narayana Reddi. This is how the *Padhikam* and *Ashtakam* in the *Five Hymns on Arunachala* came to be composed.

I asked Bhagavan: "I know that in the Madura house itself, Bhagavan had the dawn of *jnana* and that ever since then, Bhagavan had no '*தேகாத்ம புத்தி*' (I-am-this-body consciousness). I know also that Bhagavan had a '*தாபம்*' (a burning sensation) in the body which did not cease until he arrived at the temple here and reported His arrival to God Arunachala. But I don't believe this was the '*நின்னெரி*' mentioned in *Marital Garland*; I also think that Bhagavan has gone through the severe pain or physical ordeal which I have read most Saints had to go through when the knot between body and spirit is sundered. I wish to know when this happened in Bhagavan's life. I know this information is not needed for my improvement. But for Bhagavan's history I think it is necessary."

Bhagavan kept quiet and only smiled. But after a time, he said the *Marital Garland* was written about 1914-1915. By that Bhagavan apparently meant to tell me that the knot was sundered long before that, about 1896 itself.

Afternoon

For some days now Bhagavan's rheumatic troubles have been pretty bad and so his legs are being occasionally massaged with some medicated oils. For about ten days now there has been in the town some Swami who professes to be able to cure with his *vibhuti* all kinds of diseases; and people from various villages have been flocking to see him and most of them also peep in at the Asramam to see Bhagavan. So Bhagavan said, "If all these people come and see I have all these physical ills myself and need to be massaged with medicated oils, they will know I am no good and won't come anymore. So this massaging is good in one way."

29-10-45 Afternoon

Dilip Kumar Roy, singer and author, who is on a visit here from Sri Aurobindo Ashram, asked Bhagavan, "According to the *Maha Yoga* you say that the sages have not said anything to contradict each other. Yet, we find one advocating *bhakti*, another *jnana*, etc., leading thus to all sorts of quarrels."

Bhagavan: There is really nothing contradictory in such teachings. When for instance a follower of *bhakti marga* declares that *bhakti* is the best, he really means by the word *bhakti* what the *jnana marga* man calls *jnana*. There is no difference in the state or its description by attributes or transcendence of attributes. Only different thinkers have used different words. All these different *margas*, or paths or *sadhanas* lead to the same goal. What is once a means becomes itself the goal. When that happens *dhyana, bhakti* or *jnana*, which was at one time a conscious and painful effort, becomes the normal and natural state, spontaneously and without effort.

30-10-45 Afternoon

Dilip Kumar Roy read out a poem in English composed by him on Bhagavan and sang some songs before Bhagavan.

Later he asked Bhagavan, "While all say Guru's direction is necessary it seems Bhagavan has said a Guru is not necessary."

Bhagavan: I have not said so. But a Guru need not always be in human form. First a person thinks he is an inferior and that there is a superior, all-knowing and all-powerful God who controls his own and the world's destiny, and worships him or does *bhakti*. When he reaches a certain stage and becomes fit for enlightenment, the same God whom he was worshipping comes as Guru and leads him on. That Guru comes only to tell him. 'The God is within yourself. Dive within and realise.' God, Guru and the Self are the same.

Roy: But in Bhagavan's case there was no Guru.

Bhagavan: The whole world was my Guru. It has been already said that Guru need not be in human form and that the Self within, God and Guru are the same.

Roy: I once asked my Gurudev (*i.e.*, Sri Aurobindo) about this and he said, 'A spiritual Hercules like Bhagavan needs no Guru'.

Bhagavan: Everything in the world was my Guru. Don't you know that Dattatreya, when he was asked by the king which Guru had taught him the secret of bliss, replied that the earth, water, fire, animals, men etc., all were his Gurus and went on explaining how some of these taught him to cling to what was good and others taught him what things he should avoid as bad.

31-10-45 Morning

Chella Battar (Daivasikamani Battar), temple priest of Tiruchuzhi, has come. Bhagavan pointed him out to me and said, "Whenever I see him I am reminded of the cut I received on my left finger and the scar it has left. I was about eight years old and he about three. His house was third from ours. Before his birth and when I was a child I used to be frequently taken to

their house and petted as almost their child. It was Pongal time and this child came to our house with one hand holding a new '*அறிவாண் மணை*' (blade fastened to a piece of wood for slicing vegetables), and the other hand dragging a long stout sugar cane. I hastened to cut the sugar cane for the child and accidentally got a cut between my thumb and left forefinger. I quietly asked the child to go back to his house and ran to the hospital and got my wound treated. It is this gentleman's son that was here sometime back, called Karpurasundaram, who is now doing puja in 'Sundara Mandiram' at Tiruchuzhi."

Afternoon

Ganapati Sastri brought a letter received by him from Grant Duff, who was here some years ago and is a great devotee of Bhagavan. In that letter Grant Duff says he is in California with the permission of the U.S.A. Government, that the country is pleasant, that he is nearing eighty, that he is anxious to make the best use of the very little time he may yet have in the world and that he hopes by Bhagavan's grace to visit the Asramam again, travelling by air.

Bhagavan drew my attention to Colombo Ramachandra's speech delivered at Colombo on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of Vivekananda's speech at the Chicago Conference and printed in the *Ramakrishna Vijayam* of the Tamil month Aippasi. In it, Ramachandra says, "Vivekananda on his return from America said in his speeches that South India was going to take a leading part in the spiritual regeneration of the world, that in the 20th century there was going to rise in South India a flood of *atmic* power which would inundate not only the whole of India but the entire world. That force is what is now being generated and radiated by Aurobindo and Bhagavan in South India."

Bhagavan was reading an English translation of a French letter received from one Zikovsky and family, of

Czechoslovakia, to this effect: "I and my family are grateful to Bhagavan for all his blessings so far. I hope to go and see Bhagavan, God willing. Meanwhile I pray Bhagavan may send such instructions or directions as he may deem fit." Bhagavan is not able to recognise the writer, but says he must be one of those who wrote from Europe (about the time Brunton first wrote about Bhagavan), that they knew long ago, *i.e*., long before Brunton's writing about Bhagavan and his teaching and that they had been practising what Bhagavan taught. Bhagavan thinks the writer of the letter must be one of those who read about him and his teachings from what appeared from the pen of Humphreys (who became a devotee of Bhagavan about 1910-11) in some journals at that time.

2-11-45 Morning

Dilip Kumar Roy read out another poem composed by him on Bhagavan. Then he sang a few songs. Then he asked Bhagavan, "What is the best way of killing the ego?"

Bhagavan: To each person that way is the best which appears easiest or appeals most. All the ways are equally good, as they lead to the same goal, which is the merging of the ego in the Self. What the *bhakta* calls surrender, the man who does *vichara* calls *jnana*. Both are trying only to take the ego back to the source from which it sprang and make it merge there.

Roy: But which is the best way for me? Bhagavan must know.

Bhagavan did not reply. (This is only usual with Bhagavan. He leaves it to each devotee to find out what *sadhana* appears most easy to him).

Afternoon

Mr. Roy again sang a few songs. At the end he asked Bhagavan, "Music also helps one to develop *bhakti*, does it not?"

Bhagavan: Yes. Yes.

When Roy was taking leave, he asked Bhagavan whether *bhakti marga* could be followed with advantage and whether it would lead to *jnana*.

Bhagavan: Yes. Yes. *Bhakti* is *jnana mata i.e.*, the mother of *jnana*.

6-11-45 Evening

An elderly gentleman and a young man were sitting in front of Bhagavan. A little before Bhagavan was about to start for his evening stroll, the young man approached Bhagavan and said that his companion had lost his eyesight. Bhagavan nodded, as usual. Soon after, Bhagavan got up and told us, "He says he has lost his eyes. I have lost my legs. He comes and tells me. To whom am I to go and complain!" For nearly a month or more Bhagavan has been having more than usual trouble with his legs, either due to rheumatism or deficiency of B Vitamin. But how serious it is may be realised from his saying he has 'lost his legs'. This is not the first time he has said, "All of you come and complain to me. To whom am I to go and complain?" This is quite consistent with his teaching, that there is nothing but the Self and that he is That!

8-11-45 Morning

When (on 2-11-45) Mr. Roy asked Bhagavan the best way of killing the ego, Bhagavan said, "To ask the mind to kill the mind is like making the thief the policeman. He will go with you and pretend to catch the thief, but nothing will be gained. So you must turn inward and see where the mind rises from and then it will cease to exist." In reference to this answer, Mr. Thambi Thorai of Jaffna (who has been living in Palakothu for over a year) asked me, whether asking the mind to turn inward and seek its source is not also employing the mind. So, I put this doubt before

Bhagavan and Bhagavan said, "Of course we are employing the mind. It is well known and admitted that only with the help of the mind the mind has to be killed. But instead of setting about saying there is a mind, and I want to kill it, you begin to seek the source of the mind, and you find the mind does not exist at all. The mind, turned outwards, results in thoughts and objects. Turned inwards, it becomes itself the Self. Such a mind is sometimes called *arupa manas* or *suddha manas*."

Today, the doorway on the south facing Bhagavan's seat has been closed and a window constructed in its place; and the middle window on the northern wall has been replaced by the doorway removed from the southern wall. Going through this doorway, Bhagavan need not climb any steps.

11-11-45 Morning

Maha Vir Prasad, Chief Engineer, U.P., who has been staying here for about twenty days, asked Bhagavan, "I find it said in *Maha Yoga* that in the beginning of meditation one may attend to the breath, *i.e.*. its inspiration and expiration, and that after a certain amount of stillness of the mind is thereby attained, one can dive into the heart seeking the source of the mind. I have been badly in want of some such practical hint. Can I follow this method? Is it correct?"

Bhagavan: The thing is to kill the mind somehow. Those who have not the strength to follow the enquiry method are advised *pranayama* as a help to control the mind. And *pranayama* is of two kinds, one of controlling and regulating the breath and the other of simply watching the breath.

Prasad: During meditation I sometimes attain a state lasting for about fifteen minutes, during which I am not aware of anything and am free from all thoughts. Some have told me that such a state is what may be called *yoga nidra* and that one should guard against such a state as bad.

Bhagavan: One should endeavour to get beyond sleep. (For some reason Bhagavan did not answer further the query put by Prasad). I thereupon advised Prasad to read *Crumbs from the Table*, where this particular matter is dealt with. Bhagavan also asked us to take a copy of the book and give it to Prasad. We did so.

Evening

A visitor: I don't know what *kundalini* is.

Bhagavan: Kundalini is one name given by the *yogic* people for what may be called the *atma sakti* inside the body. The *vichara* school calls the same power *jnana*. The *bhakta* calls it love or *bhakti*. The yogic school says that this power is dormant in *muladhara* at the base of the spinal cord and that it must be roused and taken through the various *chakras* on to *sahasrara* at the top, in the brain, to attain *moksha*. The *jnanis* think this power is centred in the heart, and so on.

12-11-45 Morning

A visitor from the Punjab asked Bhagavan, "When the mind or *ahankar* is killed, is that stage an inert stage?"

Bhagavan: Why do you bother about the *jnani's* state? You understand your present state.

Visitor: The *mumukshu* naturally wants to know about the *mukti* state which is his goal.

Bhagavan kept quiet for a little while and then said, "You admit mind has to be killed. Why don't you do it first and see for yourself then whether that stage is inert or without consciousness?"

Visitor: When *ahankar* goes, will *aham vritti* exist?

Bhagavan: That which is, always is. If the *ahankar* dies, It, the Reality, exists as It has always existed. You may speak

of It as having *aham vritti* or simply *aham*. It is all the same. That which exists is 'I am' or '*aham*'.

18.11.45

This morning about 6 a.m. Vaikunta Vasar, an attendant, was massaging Bhagavan's legs. After he had been massaging for about half an hour, Bhagavan expressed '*என்னத்தையோ பிடிக்கிறப் போலிருக்கிறது*' (I vaguely feel that something is being massaged). This is perhaps a glimpse into the inner life of Bhagavan. He was not in any trance or special *samadhi* then, but in his usual state.

20-11-45 Afternoon

One Rishikesananda Swami of the Ramakrishna Mission is here. It seems he has been advised by Swami Siddheswarananda to visit Bhagavan. Bhagavan spoke about Siddheswarananda and showed two books, one containing his lectures (causeries) and another which was received only three weeks back though despatched from France in 1941. Rishikesananda said that Siddheswarananda had learnt French very well and spoke fluently in that language. He also said that one Vijayananda Swami was working in South America and was very popular there in spite of hostile propaganda by Christian missionaries. Two ladies of affluence supported the Swami and asked him to remain there. One of the ladies was Mrs. Guirellis, (known to the Asramam as Mamita, who had adopted the Canarese boy Raman and who is staying at Bangalore now near the Ramakrishna Mission). Siddheswarananda intends to come to India for a few months and hopes to visit Ramanasramam also then. The talk drifted to the clothes these Swamis wear in foreign countries. Rishikesananda told Bhagavan that generally they wear European clothes and that, while delivering lectures, they wear long and flowing ochre-coloured robes and a turban such as Vivekananda is seen wearing in some pictures.

21-11-45 Morning

The Swami was asking Bhagavan about the characteristics of a *jnani*. Bhagavan said they are all described in books, such as the *Bhagavad Gita*, but that we must bear in mind that the *jnani's* state being one which transcends the mind cannot be described with the help merely of the mind and that all description therefore must be defective. Only silence can correctly describe their state or characteristics. But silence is more effective than speech. From silence came thought, from thought the ego and from the ego speech. So if speech is effective, how much more effective must its original source be? In this connection Bhagavan related the following story: "Tattvaraya composed a *bharani* (a kind of poetic composition in Tamil) in honour of his Guru Swarupananda and convened an assembly of learned pandits to hear the work and assess its value. The pandits raised the objection that a *bharani* was only composed in honour of great heroes capable of killing a thousand elephants, and that it was not in order to compose such a work in honour of an ascetic. Thereupon the author said, 'Let us all go to my Guru and we shall have this matter settled there'. They went to the Guru and, after all had taken their seats, the author told his Guru the purpose of their coming there. The Guru sat silent and all the others also remained in *mauna*. The whole day passed, night came, and some more days and nights, and yet all sat there silently, no thought at all occurring to any of them and nobody thinking or asking why they had come there. After three or four days like this, the Guru moved his mind a bit, and thereupon the assembly regained their thought activity. They then declared, "Conquering a thousand elephants is nothing beside this Guru's power to conquer the rutting elephants of all our egos put together. So certainly he deserves the *bharani* in his honour!"

Afternoon

A lady visitor from Sri Aurobindo's Ashram asked Bhagavan, "When I concentrate, all sorts of thoughts rise and

disturb me. The more I try, the more thoughts rise up. What should I do?"

Bhagavan: Yes. It will be so. All that is inside will try to come out. There is no other way except to pull up the mind each time it wants to go astray and to fix it on the Self. Bhagavan quoted the verse in the *Bhagavad Gita* which says that as often as the wavering mind goes after anything, it should be drawn away and fixed in the Self.

Siva Mohan Lal asked Bhagavan, "When I concentrate here in Bhagavan's presence, I am able to fix my thought on the Self easily. But in my place it takes a long time and much trouble to do so. Now why should it be so, especially as I feel convinced that Bhagavan is everywhere and is my *antaryami*?" I said, "It must of course be so. Though we are told that God is immanent everywhere, are we not also told that he is more manifest in some objects or places than in others, *e.g.*, in temples, and images or *avatars*?" Bhagavan said, "Ask Muruganar, who is here. He has sung a song where he says Ramanasramam is not simply here for him, but everywhere." Thereupon Muruganar read out the following stanza from '*ரமண தேவமாலை*' (*Ramana Devamalai*):

ஆண்டெனவே யாண்டு மடங்கிமன நிற்றலால்
ஈண்டுபுனல் சூழுலக மெங்கணுமே-வேண்டி
அமரர் பலரு மடையும் பெரிய
ரமணதே வாச்சி ரமம்.

Which means, 'Because (by His grace) the mind has attained quiescence and remains calm everywhere as it used to remain at Ramanasramam, wherever I may go in this world it is to me Ramanasramam, to which even *devas* go with keen desire.' In other words, Ramanasramam is *chid akasa* which is everywhere and to which we gain access by killing the mind. Bhagavan added, "Time and place really do not exist. Even in the radio we have a hint of this truth. We have Hyderabad here. What is

sung there, we hear here at the same time as it is sung there. Where is time and place?"

Dr. Srinivasa Rao asked Bhagavan, "What is the meaning of '*தூங்காமல் தூங்குவது*', *i.e.*, being in sleepless sleep?"

Bhagavan: It is the *jnani's* state. In sleep our ego is submerged and the sense organs are not active. The *jnani's* ego has been killed and he does not indulge in any sense activities of his own accord or with the notion that he is the doer. So he is in sleep. At the same time he is not unconscious as in sleep, but fully awake in the Self; so his state is sleepless. This sleepless sleep, wakeful sleep, or whatever it may be called, is the *turiya* state of the Self, on which as the screen, all the three *avasthas*, the waking, dream and sleep, pass, leaving the screen unaffected." Bhagavan said that instead of holding on to that which exists, we are looking for that which does not. We bother about the past and the future, not realising the truth of the present. We do not know the '*ஆதி*' (beginning) or the '*அந்தம்*' (end). But we know the middle. If we find out the truth of this, we shall know the beginning and the end. Bhagavan quoted from *Bhagavad Gita*: "I am in the heart of all beings and am their beginning, middle and end." Bhagavan also said the reality is only *mauna* and quoted Thayumanavar:

வேறுபடுங் சமயமெல்லாம் புகுந்து பார்க்கின்
விளங்குமரம் பொருளேநின் விளையாட் டல்லால்
மாறுபடுங் கருத்தில்லை முடிவில் மோன
வாரிதியில் நதித்திரள்போல் வயங்கிற் றம்மா

(கல்லாலின்-25)

(*i.e.*, If we scrutinise all the religions which look so different, we find nothing discrepant at all in them, but they are only your (Lord's) sport. They all end in quiescence or *mauna*, as rivers merge in the sea).

In this connection Bhagavan also said, when one talks of *brahmakara vritti* for the mind, it is something like saying *samudrakara nadi*, about the river which has merged in the ocean.

Night

Following Bhagavan's quotation from the *Gita*, Rishikesananda referred to a verse from *Mandukya Upanishad* in which the words *adi* and *anta* occur. Bhagavan took it out and explained the text, which says: "That which was not in the beginning and which won't be at the end, but which is only in the middle, can't be real. Only that can be real which is not only in the middle, but also at the beginning and the end".

Dr. Srinivasa Rao asked Bhagavan, "When we enquire within 'who am I?' what is that?"

Bhagavan: It is the ego. It is only that which makes the *vichara* also. The Self has no *vichara*. That which makes the enquiry is the ego. The 'I' about which the enquiry is made is also the ego. As the result of the enquiry the ego ceases to exist and only the Self is found to exist.

I asked Bhagavan, "It seems this morning Rishikesananda quoted some text which says wherever the mind goes, that is *samadhi*. How can that be? Our mind goes after whatever it likes. Can that be *samadhi*?"

Bhagavan: That passage refers to *jnanis*. Whatever they may be doing, there is no break in their *samadhi* state. Their bodies may be engaged in whatever activities they were intended by *prarabdha* to go through. But they are always in the Self. We associate or identify ourselves with the body; whatever it does, we say we do. The *Bhagavad Gita* says, 'The wise man will think the senses move among the sense objects and be unattached to the activities of the sense organs.' I would go farther and say that the *jnani* does not think even that. He is the Self and sees nothing apart from himself. What the *Bhagavad Gita* says in the

above passage is for the *abhyasi* or the practiser. There is no harm in engaging in whatever activities naturally come to one. The hindrance or bondage is in imagining that we are the doers and attaching ourselves to the fruits of such activities.

In this connection Bhagavan also said, "A man says 'I came from Madras'. But in reality 'he' did not come. The *jutka* or some other vehicle brought him from his house to the railway station, the train brought him to Tiruvannamalai railway station, and from there some other cart brought him here. But he says 'I came'. This is how we identify ourselves with the acts of the body and the senses." Bhagavan also quoted from the *Vedanta Chudamani* to the effect that the activities of the *jnani* are all *samadhi, i.e*. he is always in his real state, whatever his body may happen to be doing. Bhagavan also referred to Rajeswarananda and said that once he planned to take a big party of pilgrims with Bhagavan in their midst. Bhagavan said, "I did not consent to go and the thing had to be dropped. What is there I could go and see? I see nothing. What is the use of my going anywhere?" ("*பார்த்தால் ஒன்றும் தெரிகிறதில்லை*") This is one of those self-revealing statements, which sometimes escape Bhagavan's lips.

The following remarks were also made by Bhagavan this night:

"The *jnani* sees he is the Self and it is on that Self as the screen that the various cinema-pictures of what is called the world pass. He remains unaffected by the shadows which play on the surface of that screen.

"See with the '*ஊனக்கண்*' (the physical eye), and you see the world. See with the '*ஞானக்கண்*' (the eye of realisation), everything appears '*பிரம்மமயம்*' (as the Self).

"To see an object that is in the dark, both the eye and the light of a lamp are required. To see the light only, the eye is enough. But to see the sun, there is no need of any other light.

Even if you take the lamp with you, its light will be drowned in the light of the sun. Our intellect or *buddhi* is of no use to realise the Self. To see the world or external objects, the mind and the reflected light (or *chidabhasa*) which always arises with it are necessary. To see the Self, the mind has simply to be turned inside and there is no need of the reflected light.

"If we concentrate on any thought and go to sleep in that state, immediately on waking the same thought will continue in our mind. People who are given chloroform are asked to count one, two, etc. A man who goes under after saying six for instance will, when he again comes to, start saying seven, eight, etc.

"In some books, the ego is compared to a leech; before leaving one body it takes hold of another."

22-11-45 Morning

Bhagavan explained how it is said in books that the highest possible happiness, which a human being can attain or which the ten grades of beings higher than man, ending with gods like Brahma can attain, is like foam in the deluging flood of the bliss of the Self.

Imagine a man in robust health; of vigorous adult age, endowed with unsurpassed wealth and power, with intellect and all other resources, and married to a fair and faithful wife, and conceive of his happiness.

Each higher grade of being above man is capable of a hundred-fold greater happiness than that of the grade below. But the highest happiness of all the eleven grades of being is only the foam in the flooding ocean of divine bliss.

In this connection Bhagavan narrated the following story:

"A king was passing through a forest in all his pomp and pageantry, with his army and retinue behind him. He came across a man with not even a cod-piece on him, lying on the

ground, with one leg cocked over the other and laughing away, apparently supremely happy and contented with himself and all the world. The king was struck with the man's happy state and sent for him. But when the king's men approached the nude ascetic and delivered the king's message, he took absolutely no notice and continued in his ascetic bliss. On being told of this, the king himself went to the man and even then the man took no notice. Thereupon it struck the king that this must be no common man, and said: 'Swami, you are evidently supremely happy. May we know what is the secret of such happiness and from which Guru you learnt it?' Thereupon the ascetic told the king: 'I have had twenty-four Gurus. Everything, this body, the earth, the birds, some instruments, some persons all have taught me.' All the things in the world may be classed as either good or bad. The good taught him what he must seek. Similarly, the bad taught him what he must avoid. The ascetic was Dattatreya, the *avadhuta*."

After Bhagavan returned from his morning stroll about 8 a.m., some visitor prostrating himself seems to have spilled out his entire stock — a good quantity — of snuff. Attendant Krishnaswami noticed it and collected the snuff and threw it out. This reminded Bhagavan of some incidents in his life. He said, "Tobacco is a germicide. When I was in Virupakshi Cave, one day I suddenly found one tooth gave sharp pain when the cold rice came in contact with it and I could eat no more. I stopped eating and thought I would have to die of starvation. Vasudeva Sastri was then living with me. He had gone out at the time. When he returned to the cave I told him of my toothache. He said it was nothing and that a little tobacco would cure it, killing the germs. As we had no tobacco with us, somebody who had snuff with him gave me a little snuff and advised me to press it against the tooth and it gave immediate relief, so much so that I was able to eat my next meal. When I examined the tooth there appeared to be something like a dot on it. Gradually it became a

hole. Later on a gentleman who was a District Munsiff at Tirukoilur and visiting me came to know of it, and sent a dentist from Madras. The dentist came, stayed here three days, charging Rs.300-0-0 for his stay and did nothing substantial, except cleaning my teeth, pulling out one tooth and a part of another.

"Even before I came here I knew of the power of tobacco. When the Periyar dam was constructed and the water first allowed to pass in the canals, the water came on in a flood and there was plenty of fish in the water. The fishermen used to divert the water by means of a side channel and let it into a pond into which they had thrown a number of bundles of tobacco stems, *i.e.*, the stumps after the leaves had been utilised for making cigars. The moment the fish got into the pond they became unconscious or dead on account of the poison of the tobacco and began to float. And the fishermen got heaps of fish in this way. Afterwards I came across the following stanza in *தாயுமானவர்* (Thayumanavar) which alludes to the above practice of fishermen (in *திடமுறவே* 4).

உள்ளத்தி னுள்ளே யொளித்தென்னை யாட்டுகின்ற
கள்ளக் கருணையையான் காணுந் தரமாமோ
வெள்ளத்தை மாற்றி விடக்குண்பார் நஞ்சூட்டும்
பள்ளத்தின் மீன்போற் பதைத்தேன் பராபரமே.

Translation: I am struggling like the fish caught in the pond whose waters diverted from the flood had been poisoned by flesh-eaters. Is it possible for me to understand your hidden kindness. Oh Almighty, who lying concealed in my heart is moving me about like a puppet?"

After this, at Dr. Srinivasa Rao's request, Bhagavan explained the stanza occurring at the end of '*சுகவாரி*' commencing '*எந்நாளும் உடலிலே*' and the last four stanzas in '*மண்டலத்தின்*' of *தாயுமானவர்* (Thayumanavar).

Later in the morning, at Rishikesananda's request Bhagavan recounted his first experience of the Self in his upstairs room at

Madura. "When I lay down with limbs outstretched and mentally enacted the death scene and realised that the body would be taken and cremated and yet I would live, some force, call it *atmic* power or anything else, rose within me and took possession of me. With that, I was reborn and I became a new man. I became indifferent to everything afterwards, having neither likes nor dislikes." Dr. Srinivasa Rao asked Bhagavan how he first came to have *bhakti*. Bhagavan replied, "The first thing that evoked *bhakti* in me was the book '*Periya Puranam*', which I came across in my house, which belonged to a neighbour and which I read through. It was however only after the experience described above that I used to go daily to the temple and pray that I should become devoted like one of the sixty-three saints (Nayanmar) of '*Periya Puranam*'."

Afternoon

Dr. Srinivasa Rao told the Swami, "I have heard from one, who said he saw it, that when Bhagavan was in Skandasramam, a snake once crept over his body." Bhagavan said, "Snakes raise their hoods and look into our eyes and they seem to know when they need not be afraid, and then they pass over us. It did not strike me either that I should do anything to it."

Later Bhagavan said, "Even though we usually describe the reality as *Sat, Chit, Ananda*, even that is not quite a correct description. It cannot really be described. By this description all that we endeavour to make plain is that it is not *asat*, that it is not *jada* and that it is free from all pain."

Again Bhagavan said, "We are all in reality *Sat-Chit-Ananda*. But we imagine we are bound and are having all these pains."

I asked, "Why do we imagine so? Why does this ignorance or *ajnana* come to us?"

Bhagavan said, "Enquire to whom has this ignorance come and you will find it never came to you and that you have always been that *Sat-Chit-Ananda*. One performs all sorts

of penances to become what one already is. All effort is simply to get rid of this *viparita buddhi* or mistaken impression that one is limited and bound by the woes of *samsara*."

Later Bhagavan said, "The spark of *jnana* will easily consume all creation as if it were a mountain-heap of cotton. All the crores of worlds being built upon the weak (or no) foundation of the ego, they all topple down when the atomic bomb of *jnana* comes down upon them." Bhagavan said, "All talk of surrender is like pinching jaggery from the jaggery image of Lord Ganesa and offering it as *naivedya* to the same Lord Ganesa. You say you offer your body, soul and all possessions to God. Were they yours that you could offer them? At best, you can only say, 'I falsely imagined till now that all these which are yours (God's) were mine. Now I realise they are yours. I shall no more act as if they are mine.' And this knowledge that there is nothing but God or Self, that I and mine don't exist and that only the Self exists, is *jnana*." He added, "Thus there is no difference between *bhakti* and *jnana*. *Bhakti* is *jnana mata* or mother of *jnana*."

Talking of the innumerable ways of different seekers after God, Bhagavan said, "Each should be allowed to go his own way, the way for which alone he may be built. It will not do to convert him to another path by violence. The Guru will go with the disciple in his own path and then gradually turn him into the supreme path at the ripe moment. Suppose a car is going at top speed. To stop it at once or to turn it at once would be attended by disastrous consequences."

The talk then turned to the names of God and Bhagavan said, "Talking of all *mantras*, the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* says 'AHAM' is the first name of God. The first letter in Sanskrit is A 'अ' and the last letter Ha 'ह' and 'Aha' thus includes everything from beginning to end. The word 'Ayam' means that which exists, Self-shining and Self-evident. 'Ayam', 'Atma',

'Aham', all refer to the same thing. In the Bible also, 'I AM' is given as the name of God."

24-11-45 Morning

Bhagavan spoke about the way in which in the old days he used to climb to the peak at any time he felt like it, and that by any route or even no route. He said only the grass-cutters knew some of the routes he used. "Sometimes people would come from Madras and other parts and, setting out to reach the top of the hill, would stray near Skandasramam. Finding me seated there, they would ask me for the route to the hill top. When I told them the route was to their right and turned northward, some would say. 'Do you know who we are and wherefrom we come? We are from Madras. None of your tricks with us. The top is here straight above us and you want to lead us astray.' I used to keep quiet. They would try to climb in a straight line, and after a long time, they would return tired out, finding that all their efforts to reach the peak were in vain. Nearing me, they would bow their heads in shame and go away, avoiding me."

25-11-45

Bhagavan related how, while he was living in Skandasramam, cheetahs used to visit him. He mentioned two such instances. "In one, the cheetah made a terrific roar which clearly appeared aggressive, but it did nothing to us and went chasing monkeys. On the other occasion, the cheetah walked up slowly and majestically and on nearing the Asramam gave a loud roar, but one in which only peace and no aggression could be detected, just as if it wanted to announce its arrival and no more. It came very near, where the hill stream is now flowing in Skandasramam, and after a time, slowly walked away, giving another roar, as it were to announce its leave-taking."

After breakfast Bhagavan went to Skandasramam attended by only one attendant as usual. Skandasramam has been completely repaired and put into perfect condition recently and the path to it on the hill behind Ramanasramam has also been improved. To celebrate the occasion and to give Bhagavan a chance of spending some time in his old Asramam, which we knew he thoroughly enjoys, it had been arranged that Bhagavan and all his devotees should spend the day there and return here only in the evening. There were some two hundred people crowded into Skandasramam by about 9-30 a.m., and we all returned only in the afternoon. Bhagavan left at about 4-15 and reached Ramanasramam about 5-30 p.m. At Skandasramam Bhagavan was in a happy and cheerful mood. The weather however was a bit too cloudy and chill, with biting cold winds blowing most of the time. Bhagavan related at great length and in minute detail various incidents that occurred during his life at Skandasramam and Virupakshi Cave. He explained that the name Skandasramam was given because the Asramam was originally planned and built by one Kandaswami, an old disciple, at great self-sacrifice and by his unaided physical efforts. He remarked, "It is a miracle how, on this hill, when need arises water springs up where there was none before and where none could have been suspected. After the need passes, the water also disappears." He traced the history of the hill stream now flowing in Skandasramam, how he first discovered its source further up and worked with his then disciples to lead it down. There was a terrific storm and rain one night and it appeared to the townsmen in the morning, from that distance, as if a big road had been made overnight. It seems during this occurrence a tank called Pada Thirtham (பாத தீர்த்தம்) was completely filled up and there was mud and rock heaped up to a height of about fifteen feet where the tank originally stood. (I learnt later, on 12-12-45, from Bhagavan that half or three-quarters of this tank was again restored by a devotee).

Bhagavan also narrated at length the history of the monkeys associated with his stay in Virupakshi Cave and Skandasramam, explaining in particular how நொண்டிப் பையன் ('The lame boy,' Bhagavan's pet name for him) came under Bhagavan's influence. It seems, while Bhagavan was in Virupakshi Cave, a monkey had been bitten and mauled badly by the then king monkey and left for dead near the cave. Bhagavan took pity on him and tended him and he recovered. Afterwards, he was attached to Bhagavan and was always with him, getting his daily feed at Bhagavan's Asramam. When the other monkeys came there, the lame one would not allow them to approach Bhagavan and he pointed out to Bhagavan the king who had made him lame. But later on, all the monkeys used to come there and used to show regard and love to their erstwhile enemy, the lame-monkey. In course of time the lame one became the monkey-king. One day Bhagavan and his party had left Skandasramam for *giripradakshina*, leaving the Asramam in charge of one or two who stayed behind. During Bhagavan's absence the lame one and a host of other monkeys came and broke the twigs and small branches of all the trees at Skandasramam and played havoc with all they found there. Bhagavan was wondering why they did so. The next day the monkeys again came and the lame one got up the highest tree, reached its highest point and shook it and then got down. This it seems is a sign of royal precedence among the monkeys. When Bhagavan offered food as usual to the lame one, he would not take it, but led the man offering it to where three other monkeys were sitting, and there he shared his food with them. The three monkeys were the queens of the deposed king, who were now the lame one's queens according to their custom and usage. Then Bhagavan knew that the lame one had become king, that the previous day they all came to have his coronation in Bhagavan's presence and finding Bhagavan absent expressed their disappointment and chagrin by breaking branches, etc.

The lame one had afterwards six children by the three queens and all the six would get a morsel each from Bhagavan when he took his meal every day. It seems the lame one misbehaved on two occasions and hurt Bhagavan by hitting him. Each time Bhagavan thought of punishing him by denying him admission to his presence. But finding his pet repentant, and seeing that it was only his monkeyish nature that was responsible, Bhagavan excused him. One of the occasions was when Bhagavan took up a plate of milk intended for the monkey and was about to blow into it to make it cool, as it was too hot for the monkey. The monkey thought that Bhagavan was taking the milk near his mouth to drink it himself. Bhagavan said that, at Skandasramam, sometimes a peacock and serpent used to play side by side before him, the one with its tail spread out and the other with its hood raised. Those who played host to all the numerous devotees on this day were Prof. T.K. Doraiswami Aiyar and Mr. Satakopa Naidu of Bangalore, both great devotees of Bhagavan. Of Mr. Naidu, the following is worth narrating as an interesting study in psychology.

Mr. Naidu has known Bhagavan for about thirty-five years now. After he had known Bhagavan for some years, it seems he once came to Virupakshi Cave and, finding Bhagavan had gone out, sat down at a certain place. After a little time Bhagavan returned and Mr. Naidu discovered that the place he had been seated, was the very place that Bhagavan generally used for his seat. This, it is said, gave Mr. Naidu such a shock that, though he has become an almost permanent resident of the Asramam, and has a permanent room of his own inside the Asramam, he would not come before Bhagavan at all, much less sit in the hall or dine with Bhagavan. Even earlier, when Mr. Naidu used to visit the Asramam once or twice a year, he felt too shy to appear before Bhagavan. He never speaks about the original incident. I have therefore to be content with narrating what I have heard from others.

27-11-45 Morning

Miss Sarojini Hathee Singh (sister of Mr. Hathee Singh, brother-in-law of Jawaharlal Nehru), who is here now on her second visit to this place, expressed a desire to have the daily life of Bhagavan filmed and shown to the world. I told her Mr. K.K. Nambiar had a similar idea and even took a few shots with a cine camera a few months back, but either because there was something wrong with the film or with the operator, nothing came of it. Miss Hathee Singh said she would arrange for this after returning from here this time. At meal time Miss Indumati (a relation of Ambalal Sarabhai), who with her mother and others had come here from Aurobindo's *darshan* on the 24th instant, asked me if there was any book dealing with the ordinary life of Bhagavan, including any light or humorous incidents or remarks. I replied in the negative and she said there ought to be one. She said, "Before we came here we did not know Bhagavan was so human and that he moved so freely, talked and even made humorous remarks. We knew only of his spiritual eminence. There ought to be a book which reveals all these aspects which bring him closer to us as a man."

29-11-45

I went to Vellore on the 27th evening and met Mr. A.Lobo, District Judge, and his wife at their place this morning. Both made enquiries about Bhagavan and Mr. Lobo suggested that there should be some record of Bhagavan's life and doings at the Asramam.

From Mr. Lobo's house I went to Sir Norman Strathie, Adviser, who was then camping at Vellore. There again naturally we were talking of the Asramam. He said he had heard of Bhagavan's teaching through silence, and added, "we can understand that."

1-12-45

I returned here last night. Maha Vir Prasad, Chief Engineer to the U. P. Government who had been staying here for about twenty days in October and November and who went on a pilgrimage to Rameswaram and other places, is back here. In continuation of an old question of his with reference to a certain passage in *Maha Yoga*, he asked Bhagavan whether it was necessary and a condition precedent for a man to watch his breathing before beginning the mental quest 'Who am I?'

Bhagavan: All depends on a man's *pakva*, *i.e.*, his aptitude and fitness. Those who have not the mental strength to concentrate or control their mind and direct it on the quest are advised to watch their breathing, since such watching will naturally and as a matter of course lead to cessation of thought and bring the mind under control.

Breath and mind arise from the same place and when one of them is controlled, the other is also controlled. As a matter of fact, in the quest method — which is more correctly 'Whence am I?' and not merely 'Who am I?' — we are not simply trying to eliminate saying 'we are not the body, not the senses and so on,' to reach what remains as the ultimate reality, but we are trying to find whence the 'I' thought for the ego arises within us. The method contains within it, though implicitly and not expressly, the watching of the breath. When we watch wherefrom the 'I'-thought, the root of all thoughts, springs, we are necessarily watching the source of breath also, as the 'I'-thought and the breath arise from the same source.

Mr. Prasad again asked whether, for controlling breath, the regular *pranayama* is not better in which 1:4:2 proportion for breathing in, retaining, and breathing out is prescribed. Bhagavan replied, "All those proportions, sometimes regulated not by counting but by uttering *mantras*, etc., are aids for controlling the mind. That is all. Watching the breath is also

one form of *pranayama*. Retaining breath, etc., is more violent and may be harmful in some cases, *e.g.*, when there is no proper Guru to guide the *sadhak* at every step and stage. But merely watching the breath is easy and involves no risk."

An old gentleman, Mr. Swaminatha Aiyar, a vakil from Dindigul, had come. With him was a male child about three years old, called Ramana. Apparently the child had not until then seen Bhagavan, though he had heard a good deal about Bhagavan. So the boy said in the hall *ரமணைவைக் கண்டு பிடிச்சுவிட்டேன்* (*i.e.*, I have now discovered Ramana). This naturally caused laughter amongst us all and Bhagavan joined in the laugh.

The old gentleman asked Bhagavan whether one should not first go through *nirvikalpa samadhi* before attaining *sahaja samadhi*. Bhagavan replied, "When we have *vikalpas* and are trying to give them up, *i.e.*, when we are still not perfected, but have to make conscious effort to keep the mind one-pointed or free from thought it is *nirvikalpa samadhi*. When through practice we are always in that state, not going into *samadhi* and coming out again, that is the *sahaja* state. In *sahaja* one sees always oneself. He sees the *jagat* as *swarupa* or *brahmakara*. What is once the means becomes itself the goal, eventually, whatever method one follows, *dhyana, jnana* or *bhakti*. *Samadhi* is another name for ourselves, for our real state."

In the evening, after *parayana*, Bhagavan was looking into a book. Bhagavan turned to me and said it was *Glimpses of Sai Baba* by Mr. B.V. Narasimha Aiyar and that Mr. Shroff had bought it for Bhagavan's perusal. I said, "Yes, I saw it in Shroff's house this morning. I wonder if it contains anything new, not contained in his previous works on Sai Baba." Bhagavan read out the introduction to the book by Justice Kuppuswami Aiyar. Dr. Syed, who was in the hall, said he had read the book and that it contained nothing new.

He also said that Mr. Narasimha Aiyar, when questioned on the subject, could not say whether Sai Baba taught Self-realisation to anybody. Almost immediately as if to contradict Dr. Syed, Bhagavan read out from the introduction to the book a sentence which says that Sai Baba not only granted boons for material relief to his devotees, but also gave them a push towards their ultimate goal of Self-realisation.

2-12-45

This morning the Dowager Rani of Vizianagaram with two or three others came to the hall, having arrived at the Asramam last night. Dr. Srinivasa Rao was massaging Bhagavan's feet. Bhagavan told Dr. Srinivasa Rao, "You go and sit; otherwise they would come and ask what is the matter with Bhagavan's health." Doctor accordingly stopped massaging. Bhagavan does not like any fuss to be made about him on any account.

In the afternoon I showed a book called *Wonderful India* to Bhagavan. It contained many pictures and Bhagavan went through the book for more than an hour, looking at the pictures.

4-12-45

About the middle of last month certain rearrangements were made in the hall, a railing put round Bhagavan's couch on the western and southern sides, all the shelves removed to the eastern half of the hall, etc. When all this was done I remarked such crowding of furniture near Bhagavan's couch might increase the bug-pest. Then we spoke of insecticides and about DDT, the most effective insecticide discovered during the war. This morning Lt. Shroff brought some DDT and sprayed it in the hall and on the furniture, including Bhagavan's sofa. Bhagavan advised it should be tried on the cow-shed and he was very solicitous that if possible the cows should be rid of all flies now troubling them. Lt. Shroff left some DDT in the Asramam with instructions as to how it

should be used. We found the *Mauni* had already with him a cutting from some paper in which full instructions about the use of DDT were given.

6-12-45 Afternoon

Mr. G. Subba Rao spoke to Bhagavan about the late Mauna Swami of Courtallam. He was with Bhagavan originally in 1906. He was called Sivayya then. Today Bhagavan recalled that it was Sivayya who first gave him a *kamandalam*. It seems Sivayya stayed with Bhagavan for about a year or so, then went to Courtallam, and when he again came to Bhagavan about 1909 or 1910, he brought a coconut *kamandalam*, the first Bhagavan ever used. Bhagavan took out the picture in the book '*ரமண விஜயம்*' (*Ramana Vijayam*) in which there is a picture of Bhagavan sitting on a rock, holding this particular *kamandalam* in his right hand and resting his left hand on his left thigh. Bhagavan is at the peak of health and strength in this picture.

Night

Referring to the stanza '*அங்கியுரு வாயுமொளி*' (3rd stanza of *Sri Arunachala Mahatmya* in *Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*) I asked Bhagavan, whether the cave mentioned in it is inside God or inside the mountain (which of course is also said to be God). Bhagavan replied, "Of course, in the context, it means the cave is inside the hill and that there, in the cave, are all enjoyments." Bhagavan added, "The stanza says you are to believe that inside this hill there is a cave, which is brilliance itself or which is glorious with light, and that all enjoyments are to be found there." I also asked Bhagavan, "I have read somewhere that this place is called *bhoga kshetra*. I wonder what is meant thereby." Bhagavan replied, "Yes, it is said so. But what does it mean? If thinking of this *kshetra* can itself give *mukti*, what wonder if this place can give all other enjoyments one may desire?" Dr. Srinivasa Rao asked whether

after putting oneself the question "Who am I?" one should remain quiet or whether one should go on to give the answer, such as "I am not this body, senses, etc." or whether one should go on repeating the question "Who am I?"

Bhagavan: "Why should you go on repeating 'Who am I?' as if it is a *mantra*. If other thoughts arise, then the questions, 'To whom do these thoughts arise?', 'Whence does the 'I' to which these thoughts come arise?' have to be asked, *i.e*., to keep away other thoughts. Even in *mantra japam*, when the man fails to repeat the *mantra*, *i.e*., when other thoughts begin to occupy his mind, he reminds himself 'I have left off the *mantra*' and begins repeating it. The object in all paths is to keep off all other thoughts except the thought of God or Self."

In this connection Bhagavan again said "The Name is God," and quoted the Bible, 'In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and *the word was God'*." Swami Ramdas often preaches the importance of *Nama smarana*, the Name he uses being Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram. In the latest issue of *Vision* Swami Ramdas has written about 'That thou art', and Bhagavan referred me to it.

7-12-45

The September 1937 number of *Vision* contains an article on the Philosophy of the Divine Name according to Nam Dev. Bhagavan frequently refers to it with approval. Today also Dr. Srinivasa Rao brought it and Bhagavan explained it to him. Bhagavan remarked, "All this must have been uttered by Nam Dev after he attained complete realisation, after touching the feet of Vishopakesar to whom Vithoba sent him for enlightenment." Bhagavan then related the following story:

"Vithoba found Nam Dev had not yet realised the Supreme Truth and wanted to teach him. When Jnaneswar and Nam Dev returned from their pilgrimage, Gora Kumbhar gave a feast to

all the saints in his place and among them were Jnaneswar and Nam Dev. At the feast, Jnaneswar in collusion with Gora, told Gora publicly, 'You are a potter, daily engaged in making pots and testing them to see which are properly baked and which are not. These pots before you (*i.e.*, the saints) are the pots of Brahma. See which of these are sound and which not.' Thereupon Gora said, 'Yes Swami, I shall do so', and took up the stick with which he used to tap his pots to test their soundness; and holding it aloft in his hand he went to each of his guests and tapped each on the head as he usually did to his pots. Each guest humbly submitted to such tapping. But when Gora approached Nam Dev, the latter indignantly called out: 'You potter, what do you mean by coming to tap me with that stick?' Gora thereupon told Jnaneswar, 'Swami, all the other pots have been properly baked. This one, (*i.e.*, Nam Dev) alone is not yet properly baked.' All the assembled guests burst into laughter. Nam Dev felt greatly humiliated and ran up to Vitthal with whom he was on the most intimate terms, playing with him, eating with him, sleeping with him, and so on. Nam Dev complained of this humiliation which had happened to him, the closest friend and companion of Vitthal. Vitthal (who of course knew all this) pretended to sympathise with him, asked for all the details of the happenings at Gora's house and after hearing everything said, 'Why should you not have kept quiet and submitted to the tapping, as all the others did? That is why all this trouble has come.' Thereupon Nam Dev cried all the more and said, 'You also want to join the others and humiliate me. Why should I have submitted like the others? Am I not your closest friend, your child?' Vitthal said, 'You have not yet properly understood the truth. And you won't understand if I tell you. But go to the saint who is in a ruined temple in such and such a forest. He will be able to give you enlightenment.' Nam Dev accordingly went there and found an old, unassuming man sleeping in a corner of the temple with his feet on a Siva *lingam*. Nam Dev could hardly believe this was the man from

whom he — the companion of Vitthal — was to gain enlightenment. However, as there was none else there, Nam Dev went near the man and clapped his hands. The old man woke up with a start and, seeing Nam Dev, said, 'Oh, you are Nam Dev whom Vitthal has sent here. Come!' Nam Dev was dumb-founded and began to think, 'This must be a great man.' Still he thought it was revolting that any man, however great, should be resting his feet on a *lingam*. He asked the old man, 'You seem to be a great personage. But is it proper for you to have your feet on a *lingam*?' The old man replied, 'Oh, are my feet on a *lingam*? Where is it? Please remove my feet elsewhere.' Nam Dev removed the feet and put them in various places. Wherever they were put, there was a Siva *lingam*. Finally, he took them on his lap and he himself became a Siva *lingam*. Then he realised the truth and the old gentleman said, 'Now you can go back'." Bhagavan added, "It is to be noted that only when he surrendered himself, and touched the feet of his guru, enlightenment came. After this final enlightenment Nam Dev returned to his house and for some days did not go to Vitthal at the temple, though it had been his habit not only to visit Vitthal every day, but to spend most of his time with Vitthal at the temple. So after a few days, Vitthal went to Nam Dev's house and like a guileless soul enquired how it was that Nam Dev has forgotten him and never visited him. Nam Dev replied, 'No more of your fooling me. I know now. Where is the place where you are not! To be with you, should I go to the temple? Do I exist apart from you?' Then Vitthal said, 'So you now understand the truth. That is why you had to be sent for this final lesson'."

Bhagavan referred to the article in the *Vision* of December, 1945 on *Sthita Prajna* and to the lines from *Sat Darshana* quoted in that article. Dr. Syed thereupon asked Bhagavan when *Reality in Forty Verses* was made by Bhagavan. Bhagavan said, "It was recently something like 1928. Muruganar has noted down

somewhere the different dates. One day Muruganar said that some stray verses composed by me now and then on various occasions should not be allowed to die, but should be collected together and some more added to them to bring the whole number to forty, and that the entire forty should be made into a book with a proper title. He accordingly gathered about thirty or less stanzas and requested me to make the rest to bring the total to forty. I did so, composing a few stanzas on different occasions as the mood came upon me. When the number came up to forty, Muruganar went about deleting one after another of the old collection of thirty or less on the pretext they were not quite germane to the subject on hand or otherwise not quite suitable, and requesting me to make fresh ones in place of the deleted ones. When this process was over, and there were forty stanzas as required by Muruganar, I found that in the forty there were but two stanzas out of the old ones and all the rest had been newly composed. It was not made according to any set scheme, nor at a stretch, nor systematically. I composed different stanzas on different occasions and Muruganar and others afterwards arranged them in some order according to the thoughts expressed in them to give some appearance of connected and regular treatment of the subject, *viz.*, Reality." (The stanzas contained in the old collection and deleted by Muruganar were about twenty. These were afterwards added as supplement to the above work and the Supplement too now contains 40 verses).

Bhagavan also said, "*Marital Garland of Letters* was composed partly at the Virupakshi Cave and partly on my walks round the hill. *Upadesa Saram* alone was written with a scheme and a set purpose and at a stretch at one sitting. That was because Muruganar had set a limit of one hundred stanzas for the entire theme of the poem and in it had planned that the particular subject of *Upadesa* should be confined to thirty stanzas, of which again he had already composed three stanzas, leaving

thus only twenty-seven stanzas within the brief compass of which I was required to deal with the whole subject."

In the afternoon Bhagavan explained to Dr. Srinivasa Rao the significance of the name Rama. "The 'Ra' stands for the Self and 'ma' for the ego. As one goes on repeating 'Rama', 'Rama', the 'ma' disappears, getting merged in the 'Ra' and then 'Ra' alone remains. In that state there is no conscious effort at *dhyana*, but it is there, for *dhyana* is our real nature."

8-12-45 Morning

Dr. Srinivasa Rao took this notebook and read out yesterday's entry. Thereupon Bhagavan asked Krishnaswami to take out the notebook in which Muruganar and others had noted down the dates on which various stanzas were composed. We found it was only in 1928 that the *Reality in Forty Verses* was composed.

Bhagavan showed me the Tamil paper *Hindustan* which contained an article by Tilak Sastri on Bhagavan's visit to Skandasramam on 25-11-45, explaining the origin of the name, among other things.

Afternoon

When I went to the *Pathasala* to bring some Sanskrit books at Bhagavan's instance, an incident occurred in the hall which is recorded below. Miss Kamdin (now Mrs. McIver) was sitting next to a lady who went into a trance and purported to have received sugar candy from Narayana *i.e*., God. She thinks that there was no trickery at all in it and that the candy came mysteriously into the lady's hands. I also was given a bit of the candy.

The incident is thus recorded by Mr. K.A. Mahatani:

On 8th December 1945 at about 3-45 p.m., I saw a Gujarati widow aged about 50 years sitting in the hall with two girls of

about eight and ten years in the front row on the side reserved for ladies. I could see that she was in *samadhi*.

After a few minutes she fell on her back quietly in *samadhi* posture without stretching her legs. People in the hall thought that she was in a hysterical fit, but those two girls said that she was in *samadhi* and that it often happened to her. Then those two girls started singing a Gujarati *bhajan* song in a nice tune. (The song begins 'Haji mare gher thaya lila ler').

Bhagavan was all the time attentively looking at the lady and enjoying the tune, keeping time by beating his knee with his hand. I had never before noticed Bhagavan so interested in any song.

After a few minutes the lady got up without anybody's help and sat in *samadhi* in the same posture, and began to mutter something in Gujarati. I asked her whether she saw any vision. She said in Hindustani "Yes," and added that Sri Narayan gave a message for all in the hall. "Let them close their eyes, be still, without any *pravritti* (*i.e.*, without any thought or action) and I will give *darshan* to one and all."

I translated to Bhagavan what she said. For two or three minutes she was bowing her head with hands clasped towards Bhagavan. Then we noticed that she handed over a piece of sugar candy to one of the two girls sitting near her.

Before that we had seen her open hands quite empty. I asked the girl what was that sugar candy and how it came into her hands.

The girl replied, "This is *prasad* given to the lady by Bhagavan Narayan; and whenever she goes into *samadhi* she gets different things (such as fruit, flowers, garlands, *sandal, kumkum* and sweets) on different occasions."

Then the lady said that she used to get such moods since she was six years old. The girl presented the piece of sugar

candy to Bhagavan. He partook a little of it and the rest was distributed among the others who were present in the hall.

I remarked that this was very miraculous. Bhagavan indicated, 'Yes', with only a gesture of his hand, but said nothing. After a few minutes, the lady left the hall with the two girls. Before leaving she bowed low to Bhagavan and asked for his blessings and his permission to go back to Bombay.

I learnt that she had come that morning and left the same evening. She gave her name in the office as Mataji Maniben Samadhiwallah, C/o. R.G. Raval, Purshottam Building, opposite Opera House, Bombay.

9-12-45 Morning

When yesterday Bhagavan referred to Tilak's article in *Hindustan*, I said, "Our Nagamma has also written an account in Telugu of the visit of Bhagavan to Skandasramam on 25-11-45 and the happenings there." Nagamma had told me previously about this. This morning, Nagamma brought the writing and showed it to Bhagavan. He read a little and then said, "Let her read it. We shall all listen," and returned the paper to her. Before she could read it out, Bhagavan began talking to us about other matters. Bhagavan said that the old disciple Kandaswami was anxious to build a separate Asramam for Bhagavan. He inspected various places on the hill and in the forests to select a site, and finally suggested the present Skandasramam site and then Bhagavan also approved of it. Thereupon Kandaswami began converting what was a thick forest of prickly pear on the mountain slope. The result of his labours, unaided by any at the time, is the Asramam we see now. He added, "You cannot imagine the state the site was in originally. Kandaswami worked with almost superhuman effort, achieved by his own hands what even four people together could not have done. He removed all the prickly pear, reduced stone and boulder to level ground,

created a garden and raised the Asramam. We got four coconut trees for planting. To plant them properly Kandaswami dug huge square pits about ten feet deep. That would give you an idea of the amount of labour he put into the work he took on hand. He was a strong, well-built man." Then Bhagavan showed us a group photo in *Self-Realisation* in which the above Kandaswami, Perumalswami, Palaniswami, Sivaprakasam Pillai, Narayana Reddi, Iswara Swami, etc., are sitting with Bhagavan. The photo was taken on a rock behind Virupakshi Cave. He then added, "Kandaswami looks like a weak and lean man in this photo. That is because he went away from us for more than a month and was doing *tapas* at '*ஏழு சுனை*' (Seven Springs) and was purposely underfeeding himself. Before that, he was a muscular, well-built man. He went away with only some flour and a little jaggery to Seven Springs and lived there for about one and a half months, living only on these scanty provisions. One night at about 7 p.m. myself, Perumalswami, Nagappa Chetti and possibly one or two others went in search of Kandaswami and found him sleeping inside the rocks at Seven Springs. Perumalswami went inside and brought out Kandaswami's conch. Kandaswami and Perumalswami were adepts at blowing long, continuous blasts on the conch. Perumalswami blew a loud, long blast outside the cave. Kandaswami woke up and, recognising that it was Perumalswami that was blowing the conch, came out. Seeing me, he prostrated himself. We all spent the night there. We finished what was left of the flour and jaggery which he had, and burnt away the firewood he had gathered, made it impossible for him to continue there and persuaded him to come away with us. It was because of his fasting and *tapas* that you find him lean in this photo."

Bhagavan proceeded to describe how Perumalswami and Kandaswami used to blow in concert on the conch and how when Bhagavan was in Virupakshi Cave, Perumalswami, Kandaswami and Palaniswami used to go about begging in

the streets for food and bring it up the hill and all there used to share it. Before Perumalswami joined them, Palaniswami and Ayyaswami and Kandaswami would go to a *chattram* and the *manigar* would give food for all. But when Perumalswami also joined, the *manigar* began questioning why an addition was necessary. Thereupon Perumalswami laid down that they should no longer go to the *chattram* or be at the mercy of the *manigar*, but would go and beg in the town. Accordingly, a party of four or more would leave the cave on this errand. When leaving the cave, they would blow a long blast on their conches. This was an announcement to the town's people that Bhagavan's party had left the cave on their begging mission. The party would give another blast when they reached the foot of the hill. A third call would be sounded at the entrance to the street. All the residents of the street would be ready with their offerings and the party would march along the street singing some *Sivanamavali* and collecting the offerings. The food collected was ample, it seems, for all who gathered near Bhagavan and all the monkeys, etc. *Marital Garland of Letters* was specially composed for use by the begging party. Bhagavan humorously added, "*Marital Garland of Letters* fed us for many years."

10-12-45

Yesterday or the day before, in the morning, a snake was seen by Chinnaswami and others in the Asramam premises somewhere near Bhagavan's hall. We heard the cries, "What kind of snake is it?" "Beat it! Beat it!" When we heard the noise of actual beating, Bhagavan cried out '*யார் அடிக்கிறது*?' '*யார் அடிக்கிறது*?' ("Who is beating it?") Apparently this remonstrance of Bhagavan was not heard by the party, and the snake was killed. Bhagavan, added, '*இவங்களை அப்படி ரெண்டு கொடுத்தால் அப்போ தெரியும்*' ("If these persons are beaten like that, then they will know what it means.")

Night

Mr. P. C. Desai read out in the hall the manuscript prepared by Mr. M. Venkatarama Ayyar on *Arunachala Mahatmyam*.

11-12-45

About 6-30 p.m. a young man, Mr. Ramachandra Reddi of Begampet, Hyderabad (Deccan), who came here a few months back and stayed a day or two and took some pictures of Bhagavan with his cine camera, told Bhagavan that he had a film of about 100 feet ready and, if permitted, he would project it before Bhagavan. Bhagavan had no objection and so he made two persons hold a white sheet at the western end of the hall and on that screen projected the pictures he had taken — Bhagavan coming from the hall, meeting Narayana Iyer's son Ramanathan, holding their youngest child, touching with his stick and speaking to him, etc., Bhagavan coming from the cow-shed, climbing the hill and then returning from there, being followed by Mrs. Taleyarkhan and Miss Soona Dorabji and some other scenes. We all appreciated the pictures. But Bhagavan could not see them clearly. It was a revelation to us how poor his sight was. Then for his benefit the screen was held near the southern window opposite Bhagavan's sofa and the pictures were projected again, but he could not see them clearly even then.

Bhagavan said in this connection that once Mr. Grant Duff or someone else wrote to the Asramam that they saw some film of Bhagavan in Hollywood. Bhagavan said, "We knew nothing about it. But apparently someone had come and snapped me when I was moving on the hill."

Mr. K. K. Nambiar also took about 100 feet of film some 6 months back. But it seems to have been a failure. Our Venkatoo said in the hall that some years ago Jayadevlal's friend took some pictures with a cine camera, but as they had heard nothing more of them, they too must have been a failure.

12-12-45 Morning

Mr. Desai continued his reading about 10 a.m. When he read about one Kuppaiyar who was lame and afterwards got the use of his legs, about 40 years ago, and Bhagavan said he knew of the incident and that he had seen Kuppaiyar after he got better, I said "*அது பகவான் செய்ததுதானும். நமக்கு சொல்றதில்லை. அதனுடைய திருட்டுத்தனம் தான் அது*" (*i.e.*, it would appear that it was really done by Bhagavan, though he does not speak to us about it. It is his stealthy way). I said so because Bhagavan's old classmate Ranga Aiyar and one other at least who could be trusted to know about it had assured me that, from what Bhagavan had told them of this incident, they were convinced that it was only Bhagavan who had worked the miracle. When I made the above remark in the hall to those near me in Bhagavan's presence and hearing, he did not deny my assumption. Bhagavan related to me once the following incident that happened when he was living on the hill: "A cartman was engaged one night by a lady new to this town to take her to some street. The cartman purposely took her to some out-of-the-way place near the hill and was about to attack her for her jewels or molest her. Then two constables appeared on the scene and threatened the cartman and escorted the lady to her proper destination. The lady noted the numbers of the constables and made enquiries afterwards about them and it was ascertained that no human police constable had ever done such a service on that night." Ranga Aiyar believes that this was also really Bhagavan's work. I concur with him now. For from the way Bhagavan narrated the incident, even at the time I first heard it from his lips, I had the same suspicion, though Bhagavan ascribed the incident to Arunachala. We cannot tax Bhagavan with falsehood. He describes what he did as having been done by Arunachala, because he and Arunachala are one.

Afternoon

As I was entering the hall about 2-50 p.m., Bhagavan was reading out from the Tamil *Arunachala Puranam* the verses in which it is said that Gauri, after crossing the several streets of Arunachalam, reached Gautama's Asramam. When Bhagavan came to the verses dealing with Gautama's joy at Gauri's coming to his Asramam, Bhagavan could not go on, for tears filled his eyes and emotion choked his voice. So he laid aside the book and Desai continued his reading of the manuscript. I may here record that I have noticed on more than one occasion in the past how Bhagavan could not proceed with the reading of any deeply devotional portions of Tamil works such as *Thevaram* and devotional hymns of Thayumanavar. This afternoon when I took from Bhagavan the above *Arunachala Puranam* and referred to the portion which moved him so deeply and told him, in effect, that I had discovered his plight which he tried to hide from us all, he remarked, "I don't know how those people who perform *kalakshepam* and explain such passages to audiences manage to do it without breaking down. I suppose they must first make their hearts hard like stone before starting their work."

In the course of Mr. Desai's reading of the manuscripts, he read about the holy hill having eight faces. To a question of mine whether as a matter of fact this hill has eight faces, Bhagavan replied, "The *purana* says that the *Ashta Vasus* having flattered themselves in Brahma's presence lost all their merit, and to regain it they came and did penance here all round Arunachala. They were given *darshan* by Siva at one and the same time by Siva assuming eight faces in this hill. All those eight *Vasus* are still in the shape of eight spurs round this hill. What is meant by saying all those *Vasus* are still here as hills and doing penance round this holy hill, it is difficult to understand. Does it only mean they are living on these hills and doing penance, or are they themselves these hills?" He added, "It is difficult now for us to locate where the *Ashta Dikpalakas* actually stood sentry, whether at the spots

where the *Ashta Dik Lingams* are now found or whether the *lingams* are those which were installed and worshipped by them. We cannot be sure where exactly Gauri did penance and where Gautama had his Asramam. But it would be safe to assume that Gauri did her penance in the region covered by Pavalakunru, Durga temple and Pachaiamman Koil and that Gautama's Asramam must have also been near this region."

Bhagavan also said that whatever temple might have originally existed on or about Pavalakunru would seem to have disappeared probably on account of Tippu's invasion, that the present temple there was built only about fifty years ago and that he once discovered the remains of an old cannon between Pavalakunru and the northern wall of the Big Temple. It would appear that Tippu Sultan placed cannon near Pavalakunru and attacked the northern wall of the temple which was then used as a fort. The northern wall still bears traces of cannon shots. It seems the information given by Bhagavan was conveyed to the Government and the cannon was carried away and kept as a relic.

Night

For the benefit of those who could not see Bhagavan's film on the 11th night, it was again shown today at about 6-30 p.m. in the dining hall. Before we went there Bhagavan said that Yogananda and also one Shukla who was a Guru of the American lady (Mrs. Noye) had taken cine pictures of Bhagavan and that the latter's pictures might have eventually reached Hollywood and come to the notice of Grant Duff or others who wrote to the Asramam.

16-12-45

In the *Sunday Times* of 16-12-45 an article entitled "In silent adoration of Sri Maharshi", by V.F. Gunaratna, of Ceylon had appeared. I perused it in the hall. Bhagavan remarked, "Dr. Syed has read it and thinks it insipid." Thereupon I said, "There

is nothing to complain of in it. In fact, I read it long ago, probably about last *Jayanti* time, when Mr. Ramachandra of Colombo showed me the manuscript." The article states Bhagavan's teaching, correctly if briefly, though it has nothing new to tell us who are already well acquainted with him and his teaching.

17-12-45 Morning

An article in the *Sunday Herald* of 16-12-45 entitled 'The Maharshi who transforms man's life' by Dr. Syed was read out in the hall. Dr. Syed said the title he gave was different but the editor had changed it. Bhagavan also perused another article by Dr. Syed on the significance of Mohurrum which appeared in *Free India* of 16-12-45.

Evening

Dr. Syed said that the title he gave was 'Ramana Maharshi's invisible work'.

19-12-45 Afternoon

Some lady introduced another lady to Bhagavan, saying "Subbu has come". Bhagavan could not make out who this Subbu was. But, when it was explained to him who the lady was, he said, "சுப்புகுட்டியா" (Is it Subbukutti?) and recognised her as the younger sister of Chellam Bhattar of Thiruchuzhi who had visited him recently. This lady seems to have been a small girl with whom Bhagavan had played in his boyhood. He told us, "This lady had an aunt who used to take me to her house and pet me when I was a child." I asked, "Where is that lady now?" Bhagavan said, "She died long ago and her husband married again and had several children."

Dr. Syed is old and has various ailments which render it very difficult for him to go round the Hill. However, as he

found that Bhagavan sets great store by his disciples going round the Hill he and his wife decided to try it about a month back. They took Bhagavan's permission and went round and came back without any difficulty or untoward incident. Today again they both came to Bhagavan and took permission to go round the Hill. Bhagavan used to say that if one went round the Hill once or twice, the Hill itself would draw one to go round it again. I have found it true. Now this is happening to Dr. Syed.

My two sons and their wives and children and about ten more relations of mine arrived this night and when I introduced them, Bhagavan made kind inquiries whether I had been able to get suitable accommodation, etc., for them. Bhagavan is equally solicitous about the comfort of everybody who comes here. How can one help loving him and becoming bound to his feet?

21-12-45

This is Bhagavan's *Jayanti* (65th birthday). The crowd of devotees is greater than usual, many of them having come from distant parts. There were the usual decorations, music, feast and feeding of the poor. In the afternoon a number of prayers and verses in honour of Bhagavan specially composed for the occasion were read out. A message sent by Swami Sivananda (of Rishikesh) was also read out.

23-12-45 Afternoon

Mons. Georges Le Bot, Private Secretary to the Governor of Pondicherry, and Chief of Cabinet of the French Government there, came to Bhagavan. He could not easily squat down on the floor and so Bhagavan asked us to give him a seat. We placed for him a chair opposite to Bhagavan. He had brought with him his request written in French. After expressing his greetings to Bhagavan through some interpreters who came with him and who spoke Tamil, he produced his French writing. Our Balaram Reddi tried to interpret the same to Bhagavan.

But he found it rather difficult, as the French was rather high-flown. So we sent for Mr. Osborne (whose wife and three children have been living for nearly five years here and who himself returned from Siam about a month back) and he came and explained the gist as follows: "I know little. I am even less. But I know what I am speaking about. I am not asking for words, explanations or arguments, but for active help by Maharshi's spiritual influence. I did some *sadhana* and attained to a stage where the ego was near being annihilated. I wanted the ego to be annihilated. But at the same time I wanted to be there to see it being killed. This looked like having contradictory desires. I pray Maharshi may do something by his influence, in which I fully believe, to enable me to reach the final stage and kill the ego. I do not want mere arguments or explanations addressed to the mind, but real help. Will Maharshi please do this for me?"

He had also written out another question: "I have been having for my motto 'Liberate yourself'. Is that all right or would Maharshi suggest any other motto or ideal for me?"

Bhagavan kept silent for a few minutes, all the while however steadily looking at the visitor. After a few minutes the visitor said, "I feel that I am not now in a state in which I can readily receive any influence which Maharshi may be pleased to send. After some time, I shall come again when I am in that state of exaltation in which I may be able to assimilate his influence or spiritual help." He added, "May I have a little conversation with this interpreter (Mr. Osborne) and come here some other time?" Bhagavan said, "Yes, you can certainly go and have some talk." They both went out. The *Sarvadhikari* gave the visitor some fruits and coffee and he took leave expressing his desire to come here some other time. After the visitor left the hall, Bhagavan said, "He seems to have read about all this and to have done some *sadhana*. He is certainly no novice." Someone suggested that the books in French, in our library, on Bhagavan's teachings might be shown to the

visitor. They were accordingly taken out and shown to him while he was still with the *Sarvadhikari*, having coffee. He looked at them and said he had read them all.

Mr. Subramania Iyer (Assistant Director of Public Health Madras, who has been coming to Bhagavan for some years now) brought an album, containing 41 photos (taken by Dr. T.N. Krishnaswami on 25-11-45) of Bhagavan at Skandasramam and presented it to the Asramam. Bhagavan looked at the pictures, which were all good, except one or two spoiled slightly by the sunlight.

24-12-45 Morning

Bhagavan asked Mr. T.P. Ramachandra Aiyar to read out a letter written by Mr. Subramania Iyer (Dindigul), a brother of our Viswanatha Brahmachari. It gave an account of the grand way in which Bhagavan's *Jayanti* was celebrated at Tiruchuzhi on the 21st instant. Mr. Subramania Iyer was writing a letter to Mr. S. Doraiswamy Iyer, giving an account of the conversation between Georges Le Bot and Bhagavan. It was read out in the hall for the benefit of all assembled. I also read out the account of the same happening recorded in this diary.

A visitor asked if he could do both *pranayama* and *dhyana*. Bhagavan said, "One is a help to the other. Whether one need do *pranayama* depends on one's *pakva* or fitness."

Evening

After *parayana*, Mr. Osborne said that before Mons. Georges Le Bot left, he said the following: "I had the experience described by me, twice, first by my own efforts, and the second time under the silent influence of a French philosopher now dead, who held my wrist and brought me to the same stage without any effort on my part. Both times I kept approaching the breaking point in waves but shrank back.

It was because of the second experience that I decided that Maharshi could again bring me to that point."

To the visitor who pursued the question about *pranayama*, Bhagavan said, "The aim is to make the mind one-pointed. For that *pranayama* is a help, a means. Not only for *dhyana* but in every case where we have to make the mind one-pointed, it may be even for a purely secular or material purpose, it is good to make *pranayama* and then start the other work. The mind and *prana* are the same, having the same source. If one is controlled, the other is also controlled at the same time. If one is able to make the mind one-pointed without the help of *pranayama*, he need not bother about *pranayama*. But one who cannot at once control the mind, may control the breath and that will lead to control of the mind. It is something like pulling a horse by the reins and making it go in one direction."

Bhagavan asked Mr. Osborne if Mons. Le Bot had mentioned the name of the French philosopher who had helped him to attain the experience referred to by him. Mr. Osborne could not give the name, but said the philosopher, now dead, seems to have been one trained in and following the ancient Greek philosophy. Bhagavan remarked, "It could not be Guenon, as that philosopher is said to be dead."

Bhagavan continued, "He says he has 'Liberate Yourself' for his motto. But why should there be any motto? Liberation is our very nature. We are that. The very fact that we wish for liberation shows that freedom from all bondage is our real nature. That has not got to be freshly acquired. All that is necessary is to get rid of the false notion that we are bound. When we achieve that, there will be no desire or thought of any sort. So long as one desires liberation, so long, you may take it, one is in bondage." He also said, "People are afraid that when ego or mind is killed, the result may be a mere blank and not happiness. What really happens is that the thinker, the object of

thought and thinking, all merge in the one Source, which is Consciousness and Bliss itself, and thus that state is neither inert nor blank. I don't understand why people should be afraid of that state in which all thoughts cease to exist and the mind is killed. They are every day experiencing that state in sleep. There is no mind or thought in sleep. Yet when one rises from sleep one says, 'I slept happily'. Sleep is so dear to everyone that no one, prince or beggar, can do without it. And when one wants to sleep, nothing however high in the range of all the worldly enjoyments can tempt him from much desired sleep. A king wants to go to sleep, let us say. His queen, dear to him above all other things, comes then and disturbs him. But even her, he then brushes aside and prefers to go to sleep. That is an indication of the supreme happiness that is to be had in that state where all thoughts cease. If one is not afraid of going to sleep, I don't see why one should be afraid of killing the mind or ego by *sadhana*." Bhagavan also quoted during the above discourse the Tamil stanza (quoted already in this diary) which ends by saying that so long as the cloud of ego hides the moon of *jnana*, the lily of the Self will not bloom.

25-12-45 Afternoon

When I went into the hall to take permission from Bhagavan to go round the hill. Mr.N. Pisharoti, our compounder, was reading out some verses recently composed by him in Malayalam.

Mr. Chinta Dikshitulu's Telugu composition *Ramana Gopala* was read out in the hall. It was greatly enjoyed by all. Bhagavan also appreciated it and thought it worthwhile being read out to all. It was done accordingly.

26-12-45 Afternoon

Pointing to Mr. Venkatachalam, (father of the girl Souris who visited Bhagavan a few years ago for the first time and wrote

an account of her experiences in the form of a letter to a friend in the Telugu journal *Bharati*) Bhagavan said, "He came this morning. I at once asked Dr. Srinivasa Rao also to come and stand by Mr.Venkatachalam and showed them both to all so that none should afterwards mistake the one for the other. They are so much alike. The resemblance was even greater two or three years ago." A book has recently been received by Bhagavan in which Mr.Venkatachalam's letters to Mr.C. Dikshitulu during one year (1938 or 1939?) are published. The portions relating to Bhagavan in those letters were read out by Mr. Venkatachalam in the hall.

27-12-45 Morning

Bhagavan was reading an account written by Nagamma to her brother on Bhagavan's visit to Skandasramam on 25-11-45. Bhagavan had read only a little when I suggested it might be read out, so that all might hear it. Accordingly it was read by Nagamma and translated by Mr. Venkatachalam. We all appreciated it.

Night

It was reported to Bhagavan that Echamma was seriously ill for three days and unconscious for two days. Bhagavan said, '*அப்பப்போ அப்படி யிருக்கிறதுண்டு, அப்படியே கண்ணை மூடிண்டு இருந்திடுவா*' ('She used to be like that now and then. She would remain like that, closing eyes'). From these words I imagined that Bhagavan meant she would recover.

28-12-45 Morning

It seems Echammal passed away at about 2-30 a.m. and the matter was reported to Bhagavan only about 8 a.m. in the hall. The talk naturally was about Echammal and how from 1907 she persevered in offering food to Bhagavan without any break. Bhagavan also remembered three other persons who fed

him when he was under the *iluppai* tree in the Big Temple. One was Dasi Rajambal who, it seems, took a vow that she would not eat before feeding Bhagavan and was feeding him for about two months until he moved away to Gurumoortham. It seems she continued to send food even to Gurumoortham for a day or two. But Bhagavan asked her to discontinue it. It seems this lady died only recently. Bhagavan mentioned also Meenakshi Ammal, a Kammala woman, and said, "She was like a *rakshasi*. She would daily go round the hill and then come and cook and bring food to me. After some time she began assuming control over everybody including Palaniswami. If others brought food, etc., she would give some to me and whatever remained she used to take away with her." (Bhagavan said, in the afternoon, "Our Nagappa's mother Ratnamma also used to bring food in those days"). Of food supplied regularly, கட்டளை (*Kattalai*) as Bhagavan put it, he said, "You don't know what trouble all such regular supply involves. Those who make it expect some control over you. It also creates some *aham* in them. Everyone of them expects you to take something. One would say '**அடியே, உன் கையாலே கொஞ்சம் வையடி**' ('I say, serve something with your own hand'), and then each would serve something. The quantity would become too great. Any number of people bring any number of things, and at all times, and you must take them. Sometimes we used to mix up all things received, milk, food, porridge, etc., and drink it if the resulting mixture was a liquid. 'Swami-hood' is very difficult. You cannot realise it. I am speaking from fifty years' experience. After such experience in Gurumoortham I wanted to avoid it by not remaining in any one place."

Afternoon

Santhamma came and reported to Bhagavan that Echamma passed away peacefully and people did not even know when exactly life departed and that though she was unconscious for

nearly two days, when she had a little consciousness at one time during these two days, the one question she asked was, "Has food been sent to Bhagavan?" (Later I learnt from Nagamma that this was not quite correct. It seems that somebody, to test whether Echamma's mind was clear and not wandering, asked the question "Has food been sent to Bhagavan today?" and Echammal at once showed recognition). Her body was cremated. I thereupon asked Bhagavan, "It is said in the case of such people they should not be cremated, but buried". Bhagavan replied, "It seems she herself had mentioned that her body should be cremated and that her bones alone should be taken and buried in her village." I also asked Bhagavan what he meant by his statement last night that "she would often remain with closed eyes". He explained, "She practised concentrating on the head centre and would be in a trance-like state for even two or three days with breath fully controlled. I told her it was only *laya* and one should not be satisfied with it, but must get out of it and beyond it."

One Mr. Joshi, introduced by our Chaganlal Yogi, put the following questions and Bhagavan gave the following answers:

Question 1: When I think 'Who am I?', the answer comes 'I am not this mortal body but I am *chaitanya, atma,* or *paramatma*.' And suddenly another question arises — 'Why has *atma* come into *maya*?' or in other words 'Why has God created this world?'

Answer: To enquire 'Who am I?' really means trying to find out the source of the ego or the 'I' thought. You are not to think of other thoughts, such as 'I am not this body, etc.' Seeking the source of 'I' serves as a means of getting rid of all other thoughts. We should not give scope to other thoughts, such as you mention, but must keep the attention fixed on finding out the source of the 'I' thought, by asking (as each thought arises) to whom the thought arises and if the answer is 'I get the thought' by asking further who is this 'I' and whence its source?

Question 2: Is *atma* a subject of *sakshatkara*?

Answer: The *atma* is as it is. It is *sakshat* always. There are not two *atmas*, one to know and one to be known. To know it is to be it. It is not a state where one is conscious of anything else. It is consciousness itself.

Question 3: I do not understand the meaning of "*brahma satyam jagat mithya* (Brahman is real, the world is unreal)". Does this world have real existence or not? Does the *jnani* not see the world or does he see it in a different form?

Answer: Let the world bother about its reality or falsehood. Find out first about your own reality. Then all things will become clear. What do you care how the *jnani* sees the world? You realise yourself and then you will understand. The *jnani* sees that the world of names and forms does not limit the Self, and that the Self is beyond them.

Question 4: "I do not know how to worship. So kindly show me the way to worship."

Answer: Is there a 'worshipper' and a 'worshipped'? Find out the 'I', the worshipper; that is the best way. Always the seer must be traced.

29-12-45 Morning

Mr. Viswanatha Brahmachari brought a Tamil translation of Mr. C. Dikshitulu's *Ramana Gopala* and Bhagavan perused it.

Night

Mr. P.C. Desai introduced Mr. P.C. Dewanji (Retd. Sub-Judge) who was returning from Trivandrum, where he had presided over a section of the Philosophical Conference. Mr. Dewanji asked Bhagavan, "What is the easiest way to attain one-pointedness of mind?" Bhagavan said, "The best way is to see the source of the mind. See if

there is such a thing as the mind. It is only if there is a mind that the question of making it one-pointed will arise. When you investigate by turning inwards, you find there is no such thing as the mind."

Then Mr. P.C. Desai quoted Bhagavan's *Upadesa Sara* in Sanskrit to the effect, "When you investigate the nature of mind continuously or without break, you find there is no such thing as the mind. This is the straight path for all." The visitor again asked, "It is said in our scriptures that God it is that creates, sustains and destroys all and that He is immanent in all. If so and if God does everything and if all that we do is according to God's *niyati* (law), and had already been planned in the Cosmic Consciousness. is there individual personality and any responsibility for it?"

Bhagavan: Of course, there is. The same scriptures have laid down rules as to what men should or should not do. If man is not responsible, then why should those rules have been laid down? You talk of God's *niyati* and things happening according to it. If you ask God why this creation and all, He would tell you it is according to your karma again. If you believe in God and His *niyati* working out everything, completely surrender yourself to Him and there will be no responsibility for you. Otherwise find out your real nature and thus attain freedom.

Mr. Sundaresa Iyer brought two copies of '*கந்தர் அனுபூதி*' (*Kandar Anubhuti*) to Bhagavan and said they were sent by Dasi Rajambal's son (Shanmuga Sundaram, teacher in a school here) who had published for free distribution 500 copies of the book in honour of his mother's memory. Bhagavan again said in this connection, "Though she was a young woman and born in that caste, she took a vow that she would not take her meal before giving me food."

30-12-45

Ramana Gopala has been translated into Tamil and the final copy was read out in the hall this morning.

Afternoon

A devotee brought and gave to Bhagavan a cutting from *The Bombay Chronicle* in which an account was given of how Ramana *Jayanti* was celebrated this year at Matunga, Bombay, by the Ramana Satchidananda Sangh and how one Vijayaraghava Bhagavatar of Mannargudi and his party performed an excellent *kalakshepam* on Bhagavan and his life and teachings. The cutting was read out in the hall for the benefit of all. It said that a *harikatha* was held on Ramana. Bhagavan said, "*Harikatha* on Ramana is a misnomer. *Kalakshepam* would have been more appropriate."

Tilak Sastri wanted to know from Bhagavan about Echammal, so that he could send an article to the press about her. Bhagavan said, "You may write what you like. *Vijayam* and other books contain a reference to her." Bhagavan said, "Our Venkatakrishniah's mother also seems to have passed away the same night. I find it in today's Telugu paper *Zamin Ryot*."

R.Narayana Iyer asked Bhagavan if Echammal was conscious to the last. Though people (including myself) had told Bhagavan that Echammal was unconscious for the last two days of her existence, not having been able to recognise those around her, Bhagavan said in reply, "Yes, She was. She remained as in *samadhi* and passed away. It is even said they did not know when exactly life expired." Mysore Ramachandra Rao added, "The corpse did not look like a corpse at all. It looked very much as she used to look here."

31-12-45 Morning

Mr. Chinta Dikshitulu is here. Bhagavan said, "We were talking of Chinta Dikshitulu yesterday. He is here now." Later another gentleman arrived. A Muslim from the Punjab, he was born blind, but has learnt Arabic, Persian, Urdu and English and knows by heart the whole of the *Quran*. It seems

he heard of Bhagavan from some friend, who also translated to him in Urdu the English book *Who am I?* and thereupon he decided he should go and visit Bhagavan. Accordingly he has come all the way from the Punjab, all alone. Somebody suggested to him here that he should hear some other works of Bhagavan. He replied, "No. It is not necessary. That one book is enough."

1946

2-1-46 Afternoon

Mr. Joshi has submitted what Bhagavan calls a question paper, and Bhagavan answers the same.

First about the *jnani's* doing work, without the mind: "You imagine one cannot do work if the mind is killed. Why do you suppose that it is the mind alone that can make one do work. There may be other causes which can also produce activity. Look at this clock, for instance. It is working without a mind. Again suppose we say the *jnani* has a mind. His mind is very different from the ordinary man's mind. He is like the man who is hearing a story told with his mind all on some distant object. The mind rid of *vasanas*, though doing work, is not doing work. On the other hand, if the mind is full of *vasanas*, it is doing work even if the body is not active or moving."

Question 2: Is *soham* the same as 'Who am I?'

Answer: Aham alone is common to them. One is *soham*. The other is *koham*. They are different. Why should we go on saying *soham*? One must find out the real 'I'. In the question 'Who am I?', by 'I' is meant the ego. Trying to trace it and find its source, we see it has no separate existence but merges in the real 'I'.

Question 3: I find surrender is easier. I want to adopt that path.

Answer: By whatever path you go, you will have to lose yourself in the One. Surrender is complete only when you reach the stage 'Thou art all' and 'Thy will be done'.

The state is not different from *jnana*. In *soham* there is *dvaita*. In surrender there is *advaita*. In the Reality there is neither *dvaita* nor *advaita*, but That which is, is. Surrender appears easy because people imagine that, once they say with their lips 'I surrender' and put their burdens on their Lord, they can be free and do what they like. But the fact is that you can have no likes or dislikes after your surrender and that your will should become completely non-existent, the Lord's Will taking its place. Such death of the ego is nothing different from *jnana*. So by whatever path you may go, you must come to *jnana* or oneness.

Question 4: How am I to deal with my passions? Am I to check them or satisfy them? If I follow Bhagavan's method and ask, 'To whom are these passions?' they do not seem to die but grow stronger.

Answer: That only shows you are not going about my method properly. The right way is to find out the root of all passions, the source whence they proceed, and get rid of that. If you check the passions, they may get suppressed for the moment, but will appear again. If you satisfy them, they will be satisfied only for the moment and will again crave satisfaction. Satisfying desires and thereby trying to root them out is like trying to quench fire by pouring kerosene oil over it. The only way is to find the root of desire and thus remove it.

Another visitor asked Bhagavan, "If I try to make the 'Who am I?' enquiry, I fall into sleep. What should I do?"

Bhagavan: Persist in the enquiry throughout your waking hours. That would be quite enough. If you keep on making

the enquiry till you fall asleep, the enquiry will go on during sleep also. Take up the enquiry again as soon as you wake up.

Another visitor asked Bhagavan if it was not necessary that the *varnasrama* differences should go if the nation was to progress.

Bhagavan: How can one say whether it is necessary or not necessary? I never say anything on such subjects. People often come and ask me for my opinion on *varnasrama*. If I say anything they will at once go and publish in the papers, 'So and so also is of such and such an opinion.' The same scriptures which have laid down *varnasrama dharma* have also proclaimed the oneness of all life and *abheda buddhi* as the only reality. Is it possible for anyone to teach a higher truth than the Unity or Oneness of all life? There is no need for anyone to start reforming the country or the nation before reforming himself. Each man's first duty is to realise his true nature. If after doing it, he feels like reforming the country or nation, by all means let him take up such reform. Ram Tirtha advertised, 'Wanted reformers — but reformers who will reform themselves first.' No two persons in the world can be alike or can act alike. External differences are bound to persist, however hard we may try to obliterate them. The attempts of so-called social reformers, to do away with such classes or divisions as *varnasrama* has created, have not succeeded, but have only created new divisions and added a few more castes or classes to the already existing ones, such as the Brahmo-Samajists and the Arya-Samajists. The only solution is for each man to realise his true nature.

Another visitor said, "*Jnanis* generally retire from active life and do not engage in any worldly activity."

Bhagavan: They may or may not. Some, even after realising, carry on trade or business or rule over a kingdom. Some retire into forests and abstain from all acts except those absolutely necessary to keep life in the body. So, we cannot say all *jnanis* give up activity and retire from life.

Visitor: I want to know if Bhagavan can give concrete examples, like the butcher *Dharmavyadha* mentioned in our books, of *jnanis* now living and doing their ordinary daily work in life.

Bhagavan did not answer.

Visitor: Is renunciation necessary for Self-realisation?

Bhagavan: Renunciation and realisation are the same. They are different aspects of the same state. Giving up the non-self is renunciation. Inhering in the Self is *jnana* or Self-realisation. One is the negative and the other the positive aspect of the same, single truth. *Bhakti, jnana, yoga* — are different names for Self-realisation or *mukti* which is our real nature. These appear as the means first. They eventually are the goal. So long as there is conscious effort required on our part to keep up *bhakti, yoga, dhyana,* etc., they are the means. When they go on without any effort on our part, we have attained the goal. There is no realisation to be achieved. The real is ever as it is. What we have done is, we have realised the unreal, *i.e.*, taken for real the unreal. We have to give up that. That is all that is wanted.

Visitor: How has the unreal come? Can the unreal spring from the real?

Bhagavan: See if it has sprung. There is no such thing as the unreal, from another standpoint. The Self alone exists. When you try to trace the ego, based on which alone the world and all exist, you find the ego does not exist at all and so also all this creation.

3-1-46 Afternoon

When I entered the hall Bhagavan was already answering a question which, I gathered, was to the effect "Is the theory of evolution true?" and Bhagavan said, "The trouble with all of us is that we want to know the past, what we were, and also what

we will be in the future. We know nothing about the past or the future. We do know the present and that we exist now. Both yesterday and tomorrow are only with reference to today. Yesterday was called 'today' in its time, and tomorrow will be called 'today' by us tomorrow. Today is ever present. What is ever present is pure existence. It has no past or future. Why not try and find out the real nature of the present and ever-present existence?"

Another visitor asked, "The present is said to be due to past karma. Can we transcend the past karma by our free will now?"

Bhagavan: See what the present is, as I told you. Then you will understand what is affected by or has a past or a future and also what is ever-present and always free, unaffected by the past or future or by any past karma.

Another visitor asked, "Can one person create an urge for anything in another. Can a Guru transform a disciple as if by magic?"

Bhagavan: What is your idea of a Guru? You think of him in human shape as a body of certain dimensions, colours, etc. A disciple after enlightenment told his Guru, "I now realise you lived in my innermost heart as the one reality in all my countless births and have now come before me in human shape and lifted this veil of ignorance. What can I do for you in return for such great kindness?" And the Guru said, "You need not do anything. It is enough if you remain as you are in your real state" This is the truth about the Guru.

Mr. Joshi put five questions. I give below the questions and Bhagavan's answers.

Question 1: Should I go on asking 'Who am I?' without answering? Who asks whom? Which *bhavana* (attitude) should be in the mind at the time of enquiry? What is 'I' the Self or the ego?

Answer: In the enquiry 'Who am I?', 'I' is the ego. The question really means, what is the source or origin of this ego? You need not have any *bhavana* in the mind. All that is required is, you must give up the *bhavana* that you are the body, of such and such a description, with such and such a name, etc. There is no need to have a *bhavana* about your real nature. It exists as it always does; it is real and no *bhavana*.

Question 2: I cannot be always engaged in this enquiry, for I have got other work to do, and when I do such work I forget this quest.

Answer: When you do other work, do you cease to exist? You always exist, do you not?

Question 3: Without the sense of doership — the sense 'I am doing' — work cannot be done.

Answer: It can be done. Work without attachment. Work will go on even better than when you worked with the sense that you were the doer.

Question 4: I don't understand what work I should do and what not.

Answer: Don't bother. What is destined as work to be done by you in this life will be done by you, whether you like it or not.

Question 5: Why should I try to realise? I will emerge from this state, as I wake up from a dream. We do not make an attempt to get out of a dream during sleep.

Answer: In a dream, you have no inkling that it is a dream and so you don't have the duty of trying to get out of it by your effort. But in this life you have some intuition, by your sleep experience, by reading and hearing, that this life is something like a dream, and hence the duty is cast on you to make an effort and get out of it. However, who wants you to realise the

Self, if you don't want it? If you prefer to be in the dream, stay as you are.

With reference to question 4, Mrs. P. C. Desai quoting the *Bhagavad Gita* asked Bhagavan, "If (as Arjuna was told) there is a certain work destined to be done by each and we shall eventually do it however much we do not wish to do it or refuse to do it, is there any free will?"

Bhagavan said, "It is true that the work meant to be done by us will be done by us. But it is open to us to be free from the joys or pains, pleasant or unpleasant consequences of the work, by not identifying ourselves with the body or that which does the work. If you realise your true nature and know that it is not you that does any work, you will be unaffected by the consequences of whatever work the body may be engaged in according to destiny or past karma or divine plan, however you may call it. You are always free and there is no limitation of that freedom."

4-1-46 Morning

Among the letters etc., received was a small pamphlet called *Divine Grace Through Total Self-Surrender* by Mr. D.C. Desai. Bhagavan read out to us a few extracts from it, *viz.*, the following quotation from Paul Brunton: "I remain perfectly calm and fully aware of who I am and what is occurring. Self still exists, but it is a changed, radiant Self. Something that is far superior to my unimportant personality rises into consciousness and becomes me. I am in the midst of an ocean of blazing light. I sit in the lap of holy bliss"; and also the following: "Divine grace is a manifestation of the cosmic free-will in operation. It can alter the course of events in a mysterious manner through its own unknown laws, which are superior to all natural laws, and can modify the latter by interaction. It is the most powerful force in the universe."

"It descends and acts, only when it is invoked by total self-surrender. It acts from within, because God resides in the heart of all beings. Its whisper can be heard only in a mind purified by self-surrender and prayer."

Paul Brunton describes its nature as follows: "Rationalists laugh at it and atheists scorn it, but it exists. It is a descent of God into the soul's zone of awareness. It is a visitation of force unexpected and unpredictable. It is a voice spoken out of cosmic silence . . . . . It is cosmic will which can perform authentic miracles under its own laws."

Afternoon

Dr. Syed read out to Bhagavan a Sufi story from this month's *Vision* whose moral is that there must be implicit, unquestioning faith in and obedience to the Master's direction.

When all others would not obey Muhammad Ghazni's command to destroy a precious gem of his, one servant unhesitatingly destroyed it and, when taken to task for it by the others, said, "Nothing is more precious to me than my master's command." I was reminded by this of the following incident in Ramanuja's life and so related it to Dr. Syed and others. It seems God Ranganatha was being taken out in procession in Srirangam and Ramanuja called out to a disciple to come out and see the procession. The disciple was boiling Ramanuja's milk and would not come out however often he was called, and later explained to his Master, "Ranganatha is your Master and he is important to you. You alone are important to me and I couldn't leave off your service, *i.e*., boiling milk for you, to go and see Ranganatha."

With reference to Bhagavan's answer to Mrs. Desai's question on the evening of 3-1-46, I asked him, "Are only important events in a man's life, such as his main occupation or profession, predetermined, or are trifling acts in his life,

such as taking a cup of water or moving from one place in the room to another, also predetermined?"

Bhagavan: Yes, everything is predetermined.

I: Then what responsibility, what free will has man?

Bhagavan: What for then does the body come into existence?

It is designed for doing the various things marked out for execution in this life. The whole programme is chalked out. '*அவனன்றி ஓரணுவும் அசையாது*' (Not an atom moves except by His Will) expresses the same truth, whether you say *அவனன்றி அசையாது* (Does not move except by His Will) or *கர்மமின்றி அசையாது* (Does not move except by karma). As for freedom for man, he is always free not to identify himself with the body and not to be affected by the pleasures or pains consequent on the body's activities.

5-1-46 Afternoon

When I entered the hall Bhagavan was answering some question saying, "There is no difference between dream and the waking state except that the dream is short and the waking long. Both are the result of the mind. Because the waking state is long, we imagine that it is our real state. But, as a matter of fact, our real state is what is sometimes called *turiya* or the fourth state which is always as it is and knows nothing of the three *avasthas*, *viz*., waking, dream or sleep. Because we call these three *avasthas* we call the fourth state also *turiya avastha*. But it is not an *avastha*, but the real and natural state of the Self. When this is realised, we know it is not a *turiya* or fourth state, for a fourth state is only relative, but *turiyatita*, the transcendent state called the fourth state."

A visitor asked Bhagavan, "Priests prescribe various rituals and pujas and people are told that unless they properly

observe these with fasts, feasts, etc., sin will accrue, and so on. Is there any necessity to observe such rituals and ceremonial worship?"

Bhagavan: Yes. All such worship is also necessary. It may not be necessary for you. But that does not mean it is necessary for nobody and is no good at all. What is necessary for the infant class pupil is not necessary for the graduate. But even the graduate has to make use of the very alphabet he learnt in the infant class. He knows the full use and significance of the alphabet now.

The same visitor asked, "I do *Omkara* puja. I say 'Om Ram'. Is that good?"

Bhagavan: Yes. Any puja is good. 'Om Ram' or any other name will do. The point is to keep away all other thoughts except the one thought of Om or Ram or God. All *mantra* or *japa* helps that. He who does the *japa* of Ram, for example, becomes *Rama-maya*. The worshipper becomes in course of time the worshipped. It is only then that he will know the full meaning of the *Omkar* which he was repeating.

Our real nature is *mukti*. But we are imagining we are bound and are making various strenuous attempts to become free, while we are all the while free. This will be understood only when we reach that stage. We will be surprised that we were frantically trying to attain something which we have always been and are. An illustration will make this clear. A man goes to sleep in this hall. He dreams he has gone on a world tour, is roaming over hill and dale, forest and country, desert and sea, across various continents and after many years of weary and strenuous travel, returns to this country, reaches Tiruvannamalai, enters the Asramam and walks into the hall. Just at that moment he wakes up and finds he has not moved an inch but was sleeping where he lay down. He has not returned after great effort to this hall, but is and always has been in the hall. It is exactly like that. If it is asked, why being free we

imagine we are bound, I answer, "Why being in the hall did you imagine you were on a world adventure, crossing hill and dale, desert and sea? It is all mind or *maya*."

Another visitor, who said that he was from Sri Aurobindo's Ashram, asked Bhagavan: "But we see pain in the world. A man is hungry. It is a physical reality. It is very real to him. Are we to call it a dream and remain unmoved by his pain?"

Bhagavan: From the point of view of *jnana* or the reality, the pain you speak of is certainly a dream, as is the world of which the pain is an infinitesimal part. In the dream also you yourself feel hunger. You see others suffering hunger. You feed yourself and, moved by pity, feed the others that you find suffering from hunger. So long as the dream lasted, all those pains were quite as real as you now think the pain you see in the world to be. It was only when you woke up that you discovered that the pain in the dream was unreal. You might have eaten to the full and gone to sleep. You dream that you work hard and long in the hot sun all day, are tired and hungry and want to eat a lot. Then you get up and find your stomach is full and you have not stirred out of your bed. But all this is not to say that while you are in the dream you can act as if the pain you feel there is not real. The hunger in the dream has to be assuaged by the food in the dream. The fellow beings you found in the dream so hungry had to be provided with food in that dream. You can never mix up the two states, the dream and the waking state. Till you reach the state of *jnana* and thus wake out of this *maya*, you must do social service by relieving suffering whenever you see it. But even then you must do it, as we are told, without *ahamkara, i.e.*, without the sense "I am the doer," but feeling, "I am the Lord's tool." Similarly one must not be conceited, "I am helping a man below me. He needs help. I am in a position to help. I am superior and he inferior." But you must help the man as a means of worshipping God in that man. All such service too is for the Self, not for anybody else. You are not helping anybody else, but only yourself.

Mr. T.P. Ramachandra Aiyar said in this connection, "There is the classic example of Abraham Lincoln, who helped a pig to get out of a ditch and in the process had himself and his clothes dirtied. When questioned why he took so much trouble, he replied, 'I did it to put an end not so much to the pig's trouble, as to my own pain in seeing the poor thing struggle to get out of the ditch'."

Mr. Joshi asked: I am a householder. I have dependants and obstacles in the way of my spiritual progress. What should I do?

Bhagavan: See whether those dependants and obstacles are outside you, whether they exist without you.

Joshi: I am a beginner. How should I start?

Bhagavan: Where are you now? Where is the goal? What is the distance to be covered? The Self is not somewhere far away to be reached. You are always that. You have only to give up your habit, a long-standing one, of identifying yourself with the non-self. All effort is only for that. By turning the mind outwards, you have been seeing the world, the non-Self. If you turn it inwards you will see the Self.

After this discourse, Lokamma began singing a Tamil song. Bhagavan at once said: "Mother used to sing this song very often. This repeats the very same thing we have been talking about now." Thereupon I asked Bhagavan who the author of the song was.

He said, "Avudai Ammal. She has composed a great many songs. They are very popular in those parts (Madura and other nearby districts). Some of them have been published. Still so many remain unpublished. They have been handed down orally from generation to generation, mostly through women, who learn them by heart, hearing them from others and singing them along with those who already know them." I learnt now

that Bhagavan's mother was illiterate. Bhagavan told me that, in spite of it, she had learnt by heart a great many songs. The song and its meaning are given below:

பல்லவி

சச்சிதா னந்தமாய் தானிருந்தும் மறந்தவர்போல்
எப்படிமுன் னிருந்த தன்னமே — ஆ ஆ — (சச்சி)

அனுபல்லவி

அற்புதமீ தற்புதபீ தற்புதபீ தென்னிடத்தில்
அச்சமுற இடமில்லையே — ஆ ஆ — (சச்சி)

சரணம்

1. *மனசுண்டோ மறந்தறிய வபுசுண்டோ பிறந்திறக்க*
மலமுண்டோ நிர்மலத்திலே
சரிபெரிசு சிறுசுண்டோ ஜாதிவர்ண மதிலுண்டோ
சாக்ஷியென்ன சாக்ஷிய முண்டோ
நிறைந்தசுக சாகரத்தில் நிஷ்களம் சகளமென்ன
அற்புதமீ தற்புத மிதுவே — ஆ ஆ — (சச்சி)

2. *வாய்திறக்க இடமுமில்லை மௌனசங் கல்பமில்லை*
வந்ததில்லை போனது மில்லை
ஆதியந்தம் நடுவுமில்லை ஜோதியென்று பேருமில்லை
உபாதியில்லை என்னிடத்திலே
பாதியென்றும் பீதியென்றும் உபாதிவந்த சொப்பனமி(து)
அற்புதமீ தற்புத மிதுவே — ஆ ஆ — (சச்சி)

3. *உட்புறம்பு உயரம்கீழ் தசதிக்கும் பூரணமாய்*
ஒளியாகி வெளியாகியே
நிற்குண நிராதரமாய் நிறைவாய் உபசாந்தமுமாய்
பிரஞ்ஞான கனமாகியே
அக்ஷயா னந்தமாய் அகம்பதலக்ஷி யார்த்தமுமாய்
அபரோக்ஷ சுகமாகியே — ஆ ஆ — (சச்சி)

How did the Self that ever is
Awareness — bliss,
How did It till now behave
As if It had forgotten this?

Wonder of wonders, beyond understanding
Is your strange fear,
My Swan, my dear,
Your fear of me!

Mind learning, knowing and forgetting,
Body begotten, begetting and then dying,
Whence these impurities in Purity?
Bigness, smallness, class, rank, sight and seer —
Why these darkling waves in the full deep sea of bliss?

No need for speech or vow of silence;
No coming or going; no beginning, end or middle.
Nor light nor sound; no quality.
No separateness and hence no fear.
Oh wonder of wonders, the things that seem
In a dream!

In and out, high and low, and all the ten directions
Lost in light illimitably vast,
Unbroken, unsupported, full and calm,
Pure Awareness, Bliss immutable,
The once-remote, long — longed — for goal
Now here, joy, joy!

6-1-46 Morning

Mr. Lakshmana Sarma (known as 'Who') has come. Bhagavan was looking into a note-book in which Mr. Sarma had written out an English translation of his *Vedanta Saram* (Sanskrit). I was curious to know what this *Vedanta Saram* deals with and so was asking Mr. Sarma's son Kameswaran about it. Bhagavan heard this and turning to me said, "This is the same as *Maha Yoga*."

There was some talk about Sarma's birthday and Bhagavan said, "He says he is born always or daily" and referred to the eleventh stanza in the supplement to *Ulladu Narpadu* in Tamil which has been translated into English under the title *Reality in*

Forty Verses. For looking up this song he picked up '*நூற்றிரட்டு*' (*Collected Works* in Tamil) from the revolving shelf by his side and before putting it back, detected that moths had been at work on the cover. He remarked, "We have not been studying these books. So these insects have been digesting them."

Afternoon

Mr. L. Sarma came and sat next to me. This morning he could not recognise me, though I was only about three feet from him. So I was advising him to undergo an operation for his cataract. He said that he had been able to retard the development of this disease and that, if he could do so in the future also, he would rather manage for the rest of his life with partial eyesight than risk an operation. Then I told him it all depended on what further lease of life he had and in this connection I asked what the reading of his horoscope in this matter was. Thus we talked about astrology and I asked Bhagavan for his view on astrology. He said, "It is all right (*அது சரிதான்*). Why not? If one accepts the theory of karma, one will have to accept the theory of astrology and horoscope also." After this, Sarma, Dr. Syed, G. Subba Rao and myself talked about the science of astrology and whether there was any use or sense in knowing our future and so on; and then Mr. Subba Rao told us that in the books on astrology it is clearly laid down that what is destined to happen according to the horoscope may be modified to some extent by propitiatory *pujas* etc. Mr. S. Rao went on to say how the mere dust of the feet of men like Bhagavan, how a look from them, can burn away all our sins etc. At this I asked, "I have also come across some of these writings which extol the virtues of *sat sang*. I should like to know whether these writings are to be understood as literally true and whether there is not some exaggeration in them." Mr. S. Rao said they were literally true, but that one must have faith. And I asked him why, if that were so, those who were responsible for those texts about *sat sang* did not add the proviso themselves

but left it to commentators like Mr. S. Rao to add it. Thus a number of us wrangled for a few minutes; but Bhagavan kept silent studiously, as usual on such occasions. Then we too became silent. Once before I had put the question to Bhagavan himself, with reference to the five stanzas on *sat sang* in the Supplement to the *Reality in Forty Verses* and Bhagavan only said then, "அதென்னமோ, நான் இருந்ததை அப்படியே தான் எழுதினேன்;" meaning, "I have translated the verses as I found them (in Sanskrit). Don't ask me!"

7-1-46 Morning

Mr. Mahatani asked Bhagavan, "It is said in *Advaita Bodha Deepika*, that the Supreme Self identifying itself with the mind appears changeful. How can the mind coming from *maya* which itself comes from the Self be able to alter or change the changeless Self?" Bhagavan answered, "There is in reality no change, no creation. But for those who ask, 'How has this creation come about?' the above explanation is given."

Afternoon

Mr. Ramachandra Rao of Bangalore read before Bhagavan his Canarese work just being prepared called *The Ramana I have known*. After he had finished reading, I asked him when he first came to Bhagavan and he said, '1918'. I then asked him if he was narrating all his experiences since then and if he was doing so with the help of any notes or memoranda. He replied he was writing of all that had happened since 1918, and that only from memory. I was wondering at such memory. Bhagavan said, "Nayana (Kavyakantha Ganapathi Muni) would remember and give you the hour and date for every incident at which he was present."

Night

Mr. G.L. Sarma seems to have prepared a manuscript on *Gita Saram*. Bhagavan asked Mr. Balaram Reddi to read it out.

As it was said in that, "Only when there is complete devotion, the Lord will respond and take complete charge of the devotee," Mr. P. Bannerji (who has recently come after a stay at Aurobindo's) asked Bhagavan, "Is it a condition precedent for the Lord showing grace that one must be completely devoted? Would not the Lord naturally in his grace be kind towards all his children whether they are devoted or not?"

Bhagavan: How can one help being devoted? Everyone loves himself. That is experience. If the Self were not his dearest object, would one love it? The Self or Lord is not somewhere else but is inside each of us and in loving oneself, one loves only the Self.

The visitor could not understand how this was an answer to his question. I explained, "Bhagavan has told us more than once, 'The Lord's grace is always flowing. There is no time at which it is not flowing, and no person towards whom it is not flowing. But only those can receive it who have developed the capacity. Devotion is a condition precedent, not for the flowing of grace from the Lord, but for your being able to receive and assimilate the grace which is there always flowing'."

In this connection Dr. Syed quoted the verse in *Bhagavad Gita* which says that the Lord is the friend of all, the sinner and the saint alike, but that he is specially in the heart of those who cherish him and that such people are dear to Him.

8-1-46 Afternoon

Mr. Mahtani again asked Bhagavan about his question (found recorded under 7-1-46). Bhagavan replied, "The very sentence you quote says that mind is a superimposition, that it has no reality but is like the appearance of the snake in the rope. The text also says the Supreme Self, when identified with the mind, appears changeful. To the seer, the ego, the Self seems changeful. But the Self is the same ever, unchanging and unchangeable. It is like this: There is a screen. On that screen

first appears the figure of a king. He sits on a throne. Then before him in that same screen a play begins with various figures and objects and the king on the screen watches the play on the same screen. The seer and the seen are mere shadows on the screen, which is the only reality supporting these pictures. In the world also, the seer and the seen together constitute the mind and the mind is supported by, or based on, the Self."

9-1-46 Afternoon

Mr. P. Bannerji asked Bhagavan, 'What is the difference between *jivanmukti* and *videhamukti*?

Bhagavan: There is no difference. For those who ask, it is said, 'A *jnani* with body is a *jivanmukta* and he attains *videhamukti* when he drops off this body.' But this difference is only for the onlooker, not for the *jnani*. His state is the same before and after the body is dropped. We think of the *jnani* as a human form or as being in that form. But the *jnani* knows he is the Self, the one reality which is both inside and outside, and which is not bound by any form or shape. There is a verse in the *Bhagavata* (and here Bhagavan quoted the Tamil verse) which says, "Just as a man who is drunk is not conscious whether his upper cloth is on his body or has slipped away from it, the *jnani* is hardly conscious of his body, and it makes no difference to him whether the body remains or has dropped off."

Mr. P.B. asked, "What is the difference between a devotee and a disciple? A friend here told me I should not call myself a disciple of Bhagavan and that I can only be a devotee."

Bhagavan: If we worship an object or person then we are devotees. If we have a Guru then we are disciples.

I added that his friend must have told him so, for the reason that Bhagavan takes no disciples, *i.e.*, formally initiates none, and so it may be misleading if any one says, 'I am Bhagavan's disciple.'

P.B.: But what if I accept his teaching and regard myself as his disciple because I try to follow his teaching?

I replied, "Of course you may do that, as Ekalavya learnt archery from an image of Drona."

Bhagavan then added, "After all, as in the above case everything comes from within. First the man feels that he is bound, in the bondage of *samsara*, that he is weak and miserable and that unless he leans upon and gets help from God who is all-powerful and can save him, he cannot get out of bondage and misery. Thus he makes *bhakti* to *Ishwara*. When this *bhakti* develops and the intensity of his devotion is so great that he forgets his entire self and becomes *Iswaramaya* and complete surrender has been achieved, God takes human shape and comes as Guru and teaches the devotee that there is but one Self and that That is within him. Then the devotee attains *jnana* by realizing the Self within him and then he understands that the *Ishwara* or Lord whom he worshipped and had *bhakti* for, the Guru who came in human shape, and the Self are all the same."

Mr. P.B.'s first question led Bhagavan to speak further about realisation and he said, "There are no stages in realisation or *mukti*. There are no degrees of *jnana*. So that there cannot be one stage of *jnana* with the body and another stage when the body is dropped. The *jnani* knows he is the Self and that nothing, neither his body nor anything else exists, but the Self. To such one what difference could the presence or absence of body make?

"It is false to speak of Realisation. What is there to realise? The real is as it is, ever. How to real-ise it? All that is required is this. We have real-ised the unreal, *i.e*., regarded as real what is unreal. We have to give up this attitude. That is all that is required for us to attain *jnana*. We are not creating anything new or achieving something which we did not have before. The illustration given in books is this. We dig a well and create a huge pit. The *akasa* in the pit or well has not been created by

us. We have just removed the earth which was filling the *akasa* there. The *akasa* was there then and is also there now. Similarly we have simply to throw out all the age-long *samskaras* which are inside us, and when all of them have been given up, the Self will shine, alone." He also said, "*Mukti, jnana, dhyana* is our real nature. They are other names for the Self".

10-1-46 Afternoon

Bhagavan was perusing some verses in Tamil (*கண்ணிகள்*) composed by Mr. Venkatesa Sastrigal. He and his wife (Salammal) had been staying in the Asramam. But about a fortnight back they moved to Adiyannamalai and settled down there. When I and T. P. Ramachandra Aiyar and some others went round the hill on the 1st January, Mr. Sastriar and his wife met us on the road and took us to their house and there we had these verses read out to us. I mentioned, therefore, that the verses were not new to us. Thereupon Mr. Sastriar said the verses stood at 27 then and were now 108. A few days back Mr. Venkatrama Aiyar brought news to Bhagavan that Sastriar and his wife intended coming here on Thursday. After Bhagavan heard it, he said in connection with some letter which had arrived here for Sastriar, "It seems they are coming here on Thursday. Whether they will stay here or whether intend to go back we don't know." When Sastriar came to the hall, I told him about Bhagavan's remarks and added, "I mention this to you as I too don't like your having shifted there." Bhagavan said, "They came and said they were going to Adi Annamalai and live there. I did not say anything. Why should we interfere? They want to live free, without being under any restraint or regulations as in the Asramam. They must have peace of mind, wherever they may be."

Speaking of Adiyannamalai, where Mr. Venkatesa Sastrigal was staying, Bhagavan said, "It is a good place. I used to stay there occasionally. Once on a *giri-pradakshina* we were caught in the rain and we stayed the whole night in the temple there. It was then I heard the Sama Veda chant."

11-1-46 Afternoon

A young man from Colombo asked Bhagavan, "J. Krishnamurti teaches the method of effortless and choiceless awareness as distinct from that of deliberate concentration. Would Sri Bhagavan be pleased to explain how best to practise meditation and what form the object of meditation should take?"

Bhagavan: Effortless and choiceless awareness is our real nature. If we can attain it or be in that state, it is all right. But one cannot reach it without effort, the effort of deliberate meditation. All the age-long *vasanas* carry the mind outward and turn it to external objects. All such thoughts have to be given up and the mind turned inward. For that, effort is necessary for most people. Of course everybody, every book says, "*சும்மா இரு*" *i.e.*, "Be quiet or still". But it is not easy. That is why all this effort is necessary. Even if we find one who has at once achieved the *mauna* or Supreme state indicated by "*சும்மா இரு*", you may take it that the effort necessary has already been finished in a previous life. So that, effortless and choiceless awareness is reached only after deliberate meditation. That meditation can take any form which appeals to you best. See what helps you to keep away all other thoughts and adopt that method for your meditation.

In this connection Bhagavan quoted verses 5 and 52 from "*உடல் பொய்யுறவு*" and 36 from "*பாயப் புலி*" of Saint Thayumanavar. Their gist is as follows. "Bliss will follow if you are still. But however much you may tell your mind about this truth, the mind will not keep quiet. It is the mind that won't keep quiet. It is the mind which tells the mind, 'Be quiet and you will attain bliss'. Though all the scriptures have said it, though we hear about it every day from the great ones, and though even our Guru says it, we never are quiet, but stray into the world of *maya* and sense objects. That is why conscious, deliberate effort or meditation is required to attain that *mauna* state or the state of being quiet."

Another young man from Colombo asked Bhagavan, "How are the three states of consciousness inferior in degree of reality to the fourth? What is the actual relation between these three states and the fourth?"

Bhagavan: There is only one state, that of consciousness or awareness or existence. The three states of waking, dream and sleep cannot be real. They simply come and go. The real will always exist. The 'I' or existence that alone persists in all the three states is real. The other three are not real and so it is not possible to say they have such and such a degree of reality. We may roughly put it like this. Existence or consciousness is the only reality. Consciousness plus waking, we call waking. Consciousness plus sleep, we call sleep. Consciousness plus dream, we call dream. Consciousness is the screen on which all the pictures come and go. The screen is real, the pictures are mere shadows on it. Because by long habit we have been regarding these three states as real, we call the state of mere awareness or consciousness as the fourth. There is however no fourth state, but only one state. In this connection Bhagavan quoted verse 386 from '*பராபரக் கண்ணி*' of Thayumanavar and said this so-called fourth state is described as waking sleep or sleep in waking — meaning asleep to the world and awake in the Self.

Mr. O. P. Ramaswami Reddiar (the Congress leader) asked Bhagavan, "But why should these three states come and go on the real state or the screen of the Self?"

Bhagavan: Who puts this question? Does the Self say these states come and go? It is the seer who says these states come and go. The seer and the seen together constitute the mind. See if there is such a thing as the mind. Then, the mind merges in the Self, and there is neither the seer nor the seen. So the real answer to your question is, "Do they come and go? They neither come nor go." The Self alone remains as it ever is. The three states owe their existence to '*அவிசார*' (non-

enquiry) and enquiry puts an end to them. However much one may explain, the fact will not become clear until one attains Self-realisation and wonders how he was blind to the self-evident and only existence so long.

Another visitor asked Bhagavan, "What is the difference between the mind and the Self?"

Bhagavan: There is no difference. The mind turned inwards is the Self; turned outwards, it becomes the ego and all the world. The cotton made into various clothes, we call by various names. The gold made into various ornaments, we call by various names. But all the clothes are cotton and all the ornaments gold. The one is real, the many are mere names and forms.

But the mind does not exist apart from the Self, *i.e*., it has no independent existence. The Self exists without the mind, never the mind without the Self.

18-1-46 Morning

This is தை பூசம் (Thai Poosam) day. That led me to ask why Ramalinga Swami's memory was celebrated on that day, whether he shook off his mortal coil on Thai Poosam. Bhagavan could not say. I also wanted to know if Bhagavan knew anything authentic as to how exactly Ramalinga Swami ended his life on earth. Bhagavan said nothing about this either.

Afternoon

In the English abridgement of *Srimad Bhagavatam* I found it said that Prithu let his body be dissolved into the several elements of which it was composed. As this sounds very much like what is generally reported of Ramalinga Swami, (*viz*., that he got into a room and locked himself up and that, when after some days the room was broken open, it was found empty), I asked Bhagavan whether 'realised' men could make their bodies disappear thus. He said, "The books tell us that some saints

went away with their bodies to heaven, riding on elephants, etc., sent specially to take them. They also speak of saints disappearing as light or flame, as *akasa* or ether, and as stone lingam. But it must be remembered that all this is only in the view of the onlooker. The *jnani* does not think he is the body. He does not even see the body. He sees only the Self in the body. If the body is not there, but only the Self, the question of its disappearing in any form does not arise." In this connection Bhagavan again quoted the Tamil verse from *Bhagavatam* already referred to in the entry under 9-1-46; and at this time he made us take out both the Sanskrit verse and the Tamil verse from the books, I give below the two verses:

சாற்றிய குணமு மாக்கையு மனமுந்
தானல வென்பதை யுணர்ந்தாற்
போற்றிய வாக்கை யுடனிருப் பதுவும்
போவது மறந்திடா ராகி
யேற்றதம் புயமேற் றுகில்கழி வதுவு
மிருப்பதும் வெண்ணறை பருகி
மாற்றரு மதத்தி னறிந்திடா தொழுகு
மக்களைப் போலுவர் மாதோ.

deham cha nasvaram avasthitam utthitam va
siddho no pasyati yatodhyagamat svarupam
daivadapetam uta daiva vasad upetam
vaso yatha parikrtam madira madandhah.

(22, *Hamsa Gita: The Bhagavata*, Ch. XI)

(The meaning of this stanza is given on page 113).

Bhagavan added, "There is a certain school of thinkers who would not call anyone a *jnani* whose body is left behind at death. It is impossible to conceive of a *jnani* attaching such importance to the body. But there is such a school — the Siddha School. In Pondicherry they have a Society." Soon after this a boy of about seventeen years from Pondicherry came and asked Bhagavan,

"After hearing the *pranava* sound, what is the stage beyond it that one should reach?" Bhagavan said, "Who is it that hears the *pranava* or talks of the stage beyond? See and find out, and then all will be clear. What is *pranava*, and what is that stage beyond hearing *pranava* of which you speak? Where is it? About all those things we don't know. But you are. So find out first about your self, the seer, and then all will be known."

The boy again asked, "I wish to know what is the way to *mukti*."

Bhagavan: That is all right. But what is *mukti*? Where is that and where are you? What is the distance between the two, so that we can speak of a path? First find out about yourself and where you are and then see if these questions arise.

Night

The talk turned to various recipes suggested by various people about *kaya kalpa*. Bhagavan mentioned a few *kalpas* based on camphor, a hundred year old neem tree, etc., and said, "Who would care to take such trouble over this body? As explained in books, the greatest malady we have is the body, the பவ ரோக (the disease of birth), and if one takes medicines to strengthen it and prolong its life, it is like a man taking medicine to strengthen and perpetuate his disease. As the body is a burden we bear, we should on the other hand feel like the coolie engaged to carry a load, anxiously looking forward to arrival at the destination when he can throw off his burden."

19-1-46 Morning

Bhagavan told me that my question about Thai Poosam and Ramalinga Swami was answered in today's *Bharata Devi*, which says that the Swami entered into the room for his end on Thai Poosam day. Mr. Viswanatha Aiyar read out the long article which compared the Swami to Mahatma Gandhi and quoted largely from his *Arutpa*.

Afternoon

Yesterday I suggested to Bhagavan that he might make a Tamil translation of the Sanskrit verse from Chap. XI of the *Bhagavata*, as he felt that the Tamil verse did not closely follow the Sanskrit original. So, today seeing Muruganar in the hall and talking to him about it, he casually composed the following stanza without paper or pencil in his hand.

தனுநிலை யிலதே சரிக்கினு மிருக்கினும்
வினையினுற் கூடி விலகிடு மாயினும்
தனையறி சித்தன் ருனுணர் கின்றிலன்
புனைதுகி லினைக்கள் வெறியினன் போலவே.

(An English translation of this stanza is given on page 113).

Night

Bhagavan wants to improve the Tamil rendering and bring it nearer the original Sanskrit. He discussed some alterations with Muruganar, and told me that I was not to regard the above stanza as final.

20-1-46 Morning

Mr. Balaram Reddi asked Bhagavan about the Sanskrit verse whose translation is found in the supplement to *Reality in Forty Verses* beginning '*தேகங்கட நிகர்சடம்*' and Bhagavan explained how he used the word *Abhavam* and Kavyakantha preferred *Abhedam*. Bhagavan further told us that this verse seeks to establish in two ways the proposition that the body is not 'I'. First, by saying that the body is *jada* (inert) and never is able to feel or say 'I', and secondly by saying that when we have no body, *i.e.*, even when we have no consciousness of body, 'I' exists. The talk about this verse began under the following circumstances. It seems one Bernard Duval of Morocco was here for about fifteen days some eight years ago. He recently wrote to Major A.W. Chadwick (who has been living in the Asramam for ten years now) that when he was a prisoner during this war, he learnt

Sanskrit and even translated Bhagavan's *Upadesa Saram* into English, that later he had lost all those papers, and that he would like all Sanskrit works of Bhagavan to be sent to him. In connection with this request of Mr. Duval, Balaram was finding out what were all the works composed by Bhagavan in Sanskrit, and Bhagavan seems to have told Balaram that the above verse was also composed by him.

Mr. Viswanatha Aiyar's mother came and told Bhagavan, "Nagamma has written an account in Telugu of what took place in our Asramam at the *goshala* on *Mattu Pongal* day. It is very good." Bhagavan said, "Is it so? Her brother has asked her to write accounts of what takes place here. Is she here?" Thereupon we asked Nagamma to read it out and she did so. Bhagavan asked V's mother if she had read *Ramana Gopala*. She said, "I have read only the Tamil rendering made by my son and want to hear the Telugu original." Thereupon we asked Nagamma to read out the Telugu and it was done.

One Mr. Gokul Bhai D. Bhatt, a Public Accountant of Bombay, composed a few verses on Bhagavan and read them out in the hall. At my request he also translated them for the benefit of all assembled in the hall. One Mr. Govindaramaiya, P. W. Inspector from Chittoor, took Bhagavan's permission and read out Sage Angirasa's *Gurupadaka*. It seems he was advised to do so by one Subramania Sastri, a very aged *jnani*, past eighty years, belonging to Conjeevaram originally, whom he met recently at Ambattur.

This morning, before returning to the hall at about 10 a.m., Bhagavan gave *darshan*, near the cowshed, to one Mr. Ramaswami Iyengar who, it seems, has been having a Ramanasramam at Kumbakonam for several years, who is now aged and infirm, and who has come with great trouble to see Bhagavan after many years, during which the *Sarvadhikari* had denied him access to Bhagavan for various alleged

misdeeds on his part. The poor man had to remain in his car which was brought to the cowshed and Bhagavan, on his way to the hall, stood a few minutes near the car and gave *darshan* to his old disciple. The disciple just wept and said nothing. Bhagavan gave him one of his well-known gracious looks.

Afternoon

I was very late in going to the hall. But before going for his evening stroll Bhagavan himself was pleased to ask me, "You have not seen the final form into which we have cast that stanza?" and showed me the following.

தனுநிலை யிலதால் தங்கினு மெழினும்
வினையினு லடுத்து விடுத்திடு மேனும்
புனைதுகி லினுக்கள் வெறிக்குரு டனைப்போற்
றனையுணர் சித்தன் றனுவுணர் கிலனே.

(An English translation of this stanza is given on page 113.)

Night

I understood *எழினும்* in the first line as rising into the air or sky and so asked Bhagavan how it was appropriate; but he explained that it only meant 'moving'. He also told me, "We have it concisely in the Sanskrit. But in the *Sita Rama Anjaneya Samvadam* it is given in great detail and elaborately." This remark was due to the fact that yesterday, when Bhagavan could not find in the Tamil *Bhagavatam* anything corresponding to the Sanskrit verse, G. Subba Rao said that he remembered the same thing occurring in the Telugu *Sita Rama Anjaneya Samvadam*. Today the book was produced and the relevant portion was shown to Bhagavan. Balaram Reddi told me that *Sita Rama Anjaneya Samvadam* is to the Telugus what *Kaivalyam* is to the Tamilians.

When Kunjuswami arrived in the hall, Bhagavan asked him whether Ramaswami Iyengar of Kumbakonam had left and what he intended to do. K. said that R. intended to stay

for a month or two at Palakottu till he recovered his health and that the others alone would go back the following day.

21-1-46

Gokul Bhai read out the Gujarati *Ramana Gita* Chapter XI and then the Gujarati *Upadesa Saram*. Mr. P.C. Desai asked Bhagavan, "In verse 14, they have translated the second line of the Sanskrit verse as 'If the mind is continuously fixed on meditation of the Self, etc.' Is that all right, seeing that neither 'continuously' nor 'Self' is found in the original?"

Bhagavan: Eka chintana involves continuous thought. If no other thought is to come, the one thought has to be continuous. What is meant by the verse is as follows: The previous verses have said that for controlling the mind breath-control or *pranayama* may be helpful. This verse says that the mind so brought under control or to the state of *laya* should not be allowed to be in mere *laya* or a state like sleep, but that it should be directed towards *eka chintana* or one thought, whether that one thought is of the Self, the *ishta devata* or a *mantram*. What the one thought may be will depend on each man's *pakva* or fitness. The verse leaves it as one thought.

Mr. Desai wanted to know if in the next edition verse 14 in the Gujarati should be corrected or if it might stand as now. Bhagavan said nothing. He had said enough on the subject. (I concluded that there could be no harm in introducing 'continuous' in the second line, but there was no justification for bringing in 'thought or Self' as all that Bhagavan said in the original was that the mind brought to *laya* should be made to occupy itself with *eka chintana*, one thought).

Night

When Bhagavan was still engaged in making the Tamil Stanza recorded under 20-1-46, Mr. Balaram Reddi requested him to compose one in Telugu as well. So Bhagavan made one

and discussed some alternatives with Balaram. I again asked Bhagavan about the meaning of the first line in the Tamil stanza, "There seems to be no point in saying 'whether the body remains in a place or moves about, it is impermanent.'" Thereupon, he told me that the first line is not to be read as though the whole of it was one sentence and that the first sentence stops with half the line. I give below a literal translation for the correct understanding of the stanza:

"The body is impermanent (not real). Whether it is at rest or moves about and whether by reason of *prarabdha* it clings to him or falls off from him, the Self-realised *siddha* is not aware of it, even as the drunken man blinded by intoxication is unaware whether his cloth is on his body or not."

22-1-46

Early in the morning, immediately after *parayana*, Bhagavan gave Balaram the Telugu stanza and asked for his suggestions for improving it. Balaram replied, "What suggestions are there for me to make?" Bhagavan said, "I don't know. I must ask people like you," and put the verse in the revolving shelf.

23-1-46 Night

Dr. Srinivasa Rao asked whether in Stanza 10 of the Supplement to *Reality in Forty Verses* Bhagavan does not teach us to affirm *soham*. Bhagavan explained it as follows:

It is said the whole Vedanta can be compressed into the four words, *deham, naham, koham, soham*. This stanza says the same. In the first two lines, it is explained why *deham* is *naham*, *i.e*., why the body is not 'I' or *na aham*. The next two lines say, 'If one enquires *ko aham, i.e*., Who am I, *i.e*., if one enquires whence this 'I' springs and realises it, then in the heart of such a one the omnipresent God Arunachala will shine as 'I', as *sa aham* or *soham*: *i.e*., he will know 'That I am,' *i.e*., 'That is "I".'

In this connection Bhagavan also quoted two stanzas, one from Thayumanavar and the other from Nammalvar, the gist of both of which is: "Though I have been thinking I was a separate entity and talking of 'I' and 'mine', when I began to enquire about this 'I', I found *you* alone exist." The two stanzas and their meaning are given below:

1. நானுன தன்மையென்று நாடாமல் நாடவின்ப
வானுகி நின்றனே நீ வாழி பராபரமே—(தாயுமானவர்)

2. யானே யென்னே யறிய கிலாதே
யானே யென்றன தேயென் றிருந்தேன்
யானே நீஎன் னுடைமையு நீயே
வானே யேத்துமெம் வானவ ரேறே.—(நம்மாழ்வார்)

(1) Searching who this 'I' was,
Soon I found
You only standing as the heaven of bliss,
You only, blessed Lord! — (*Thayumanavar*)

(2) Not knowing who I was,
I used to speak of 'I' and 'mine'
But I am You and mine is You,
Lord whom all the gods adore. — (*Nammalvar*)

24-1-46 Morning

Bhagavan picked out the above two verses for me and also quoted the following two lines from the 7th stanza of '*ஆனந்த மானபரம்*' in Thayumanavar:

** நானுகி நின்றவனு நீயாகி நின்றிடவு*
நானென்ப தற்றி டாதே
நான்நான் எனக்குளறி நானு விகாரியாய்
நானறிந் தறியா மையாய்

Though I have become You and You alone exist
Undestroyed the 'I' persists
As I within that knows

And I that turns to what is known,
The many things knowing and unknowing —

Bhagavan added that many similar quotations could be found elsewhere among Alwar's songs. Dr. S. Rao took the book 'திருவாய்மொழி' (*Tiruvoimozhi*) from Bhagavan's hand and said, "I see there is a commentary also." On this stanza which says, "I discover that I am You, and all that I called mine is You," the *Visishtadvaita* commentator said, "I reached so near God as to regard I and mine as God himself."

Dr. S. Rao said, "The Self-realised ones could not possibly differ among themselves and the leaders of the various schools, if they were Self-realised men, could not have said anything contradictory to each other's teachings. But their followers must have misunderstood or misinterpreted their teachings in such a way as to lead to all these schisms and latter day quarrels." Dr. S. Rao said that, while he was at Salem, a gentleman often quoted to him a verse from Saint Nammalvar in which the Alwar describes the deity at Tirupati as both Vishnu and Siva.

The post brought an English translation from Mr. D.S. Sastri of his sister's Telugu letters regarding Bhagavan's trip to Skandasramam on 25-11-45, and the same was read out in the hall by Mr. Viswanatha Aiyar. The *pathasala* boys had shown Bhagavan a printed picture, "Four rabbits make a great leader." When I came to the hall about 10-15, Bhagavan asked if I had seen it. I said 'No', and thereupon he sent for it and showed it to me. Bhagavan said, "You must first see the four rabbits and then see how they make up Gandhi."

Afternoon

When I entered the hall about 3 p.m., Bhagavan was already searching for the stanza that Dr. S. mentioned. In a little time we got at the stanza. It begins 'தாழ்சடையும்' and is said to have been composed by Peyazhvar when he saw the deity at Tirupati.

Night

Attendant Krishnaswami told Bhagavan that he wanted to go to Madras to see Mahatma Gandhi and that he would return on Sunday. Bhagavan said, "Ask *Sarvadhikari*. Don't say afterwards I gave you permission to go." He added, "If he goes away now, the *Sarvadhikari* may not admit him when he comes back. If he objects to taking him back on his return from Madras, what can I do? What authority have I here?" In spite of all this K. went away, informing Bhagavan he would go and return.

25-1-46 Afternoon

Lokammal sang *Tirukkazhukkunra Pathigam* from *Tiruvachakam*. Muruganar thereupon asked what the meaning of '*நாணெ்ணைததோர் நாணமெய்தி*' (became ashamed without becoming ashamed) was. Bhagavan said it might be one of those expressions like *நாடாமல் நாடி நினையாமல் நினைந்து* (searched without searching; thought without thinking) and *நினையாமல் எப்படி நினைக்கிறது. இதெல்லாம் என்னமோ சொல்றது. வேறே சொல்ல வழியில்லை.* (How is one to think without thinking? These are all ways of saying. There is no other way of saying.) Similarly Muruganar asked what the allusion was in '*இயக்கி மாறருபத்து நால்வரை எண் குணம் கொண்ட ஈசனே*' (O Lord, who bestowed the eight spiritual attainments on the sixty-four Yakshas). Bhagavan was not sure, but thought it was one of the stories in *Tiruvilaiyadal Puranam*. I went and brought my copy of *Tiruvachakam* with commentary by Subramaniam Pillai. On '*நாணெ்ணைத*' etc., the book threw no light at all. As for the latter line, the book said the allusion was to the story of Uttrakosamangai. Bhagavan got the *Tiruvilaiyadal Puranam* but could not find the story there. The story found there was another, though also about six '*இயக்கர்*' (*Yakshas*). Muruganar remarked, "This story of Uttarakosamangai does not seem to have been published. It appears that many things in saint Manikkavachagar's life and

many sayings or songs of his would be better elucidated if we could get at the above book. We must enquire to see if that book can be had."

Night

After *parayana*, Bhagavan asked Viswanatha Iyer, "What places did you visit?" V. replied, "We went to Guha Namasivayar's Cave, the Mango Tree Cave, Virupakshi Cave and Skandasramam. We returned by the new path which is so well made that we could return without effort. It is such a slope." Bhagavan asked whether they went by a cross cut from Mulaipal Thirtham and V. said 'Yes'. Bhagavan said, "When I now see those places, I wonder how we lived in those places which were then all rocks, stones and thorns. But then, we were quite comfortable and at home. We never felt any inconvenience. There would be no light. We would walk even in the dark among all those rocks and shrubs. As one remarked, we had both lights and eyes in our feet". When I stepped out of the hall Miss Soona Dorabji (she and her father are frequent visitors to the Asramam and ardent devotees of Bhagavan) told me it was she who was escorted by Mr. V. to all the above caves.

26-1-46 Morning

Bhagavan mentioned a book about the Madhva school. Dr. S. Rao took out from the shelf and gave me two pamphlets by one B. N. Krishnamurti Sarma, formerly of Annamalai University, on "Certain philosophical bases of Madhva's theistic realism". Bhagavan said that the gentleman came the day before yesterday and gave these pamphlets in person. "He came and spoke in Sanskrit. He is the Principal of the Sanskrit College at Tiruvaiyar. He says everyone must speak in Sanskrit. He says he has read a lot and is not able to realise the truth. We advised him to read our books and see if they help. He has taken some books from here."

Bhagavan looked into these pamphlets for a few minutes here and there. But he was not interested and said, "This is all for scholars." Dr. S. pointed out a certain passage dealing with *mukti* and saying that, even after *mukti*, each *jiva* retains its individuality, that among those who have attained *mukti* there are several grades, with a hierarchy of *jivas*, and so on. Dr. S. said, "So long as there are others, one will have fear. So long as there are higher stages, one will have a desire to reach them. So this can't be that stage without fear or desire which alone can yield perfect peace." Bhagavan approved of this and quoted a Sanskrit text about that Supreme State without fear or desire.

The blind Muslim from the Punjab (already referred to) again came to the hall today. Bhagavan read an account only a few minutes ago in the *Swadesamitran* of a blind man of Nellore, aged 41, who had *darshan* of Mahatma Gandhi at Madras and who could repeat the entire *Gita* with Sankara's commentary. This led us to talk about the similarity in the two cases, as this Muslim can repeat the whole *Quran*. Bhagavan was reading the Telugu paper *Zamin Ryot* and came across some verses in Telugu by Kanakamma and Lakshmi Bai of Nellore (devotees of Bhagavan and frequent visitors here). He asked Balaram to cut the verses and paste them in the file book. "These verses were composed and read out here last *Jayanti* but are published now in the paper," Bhagavan told us. The verses were read out in the hall by Nagamma today, at Mrs. Taleyarkhan's request. When the bell rang for lunch, Bhagavan said about the blind Muslim, "See if he will stay for lunch; and if so, somebody who knows Hindi must take charge of him and be with him", and he was satisfied only after we said that he would be looked after carefully by us.

Afternoon

At Mrs. Taleyarkhan's request, Nagamma read out, and Balaram translated into English, her account of what took

place here on *Mattu Pongal* day. She also read out another account of what took place one day in September when some Bangalore devotees brought two pigeons and requested Bhagavan to keep them in the Asramam. How the pigeons had the great good fortune to be caressed by Bhagavan and to be seated on his lap, and how for nearly one hour they remained quiet as if in *samadhi*, was all beautifully recorded by Nagamma and Mr. Balaram translated this also.

I had the pamphlet on Madhva's Philosophy in my hand and Bhagavan asked me, "Have you read it?" I said, "This does not interest me. As Bhagavan remarked, it might interest only great scholars. But I find this author also asks, as I sometimes used to feel, 'Why should we refuse to treat anything as real unless it exists always'?" Bhagavan said, "How can anything be said to be real which is only a passing show?" Somebody in the hall said, "All this difficulty arises because of translation into English. The Sanskrit word is *satyam* which means, not reality, but that which exists always." Balaram also quoted *Bhagavad Gita* which says, "That which exists never ceases to exist. That which does not exist (at any time) has no existence (*இல்லாததனுக்கிருப்பில்லை, உள்ளதனுக் கில்லாமை யென்பதிலை*)". Sometime later, Subbu Lakshmi Ammal (a Brahmin widow who has long been doing service in the kitchen here) told Bhagavan, "I had not so far seen the cave where the Keerai Patti lived. So I went and saw the place yesterday." Bhagavan asked, "Which is the cave you saw?" S. said, "It is called Alamarathu Guhai. I saw it. Bhagavan said on the day we all returned from Skandasramam, 'It is here Keerai Patti lived.' So I thought it was that cave." Bhagavan said, "No. That is not the cave where she lived. She lived only in the *mantapam* in the Guhai Namasivayar Temple nearby. I lived in the cave now called Alamarathu Guhai for some time. There was no *banyan* tree then. That tree as well as all the trees on both sides up to Virupakshi Cave were all planted and watered by Kandaswami who planned

and created Skandasramam later." Then Bhagavan, in a reminiscent mood, added, "This Keerai Patti was at the Big Temple even when I first came and was sitting at the Subrahmanyar Temple there. She used to provide food to Sadhus in the Temple. Later, she began bringing food to me from one Kammala (blacksmith) lady who used to send it. After some time that Kammala lady herself began bringing the food to me, instead of sending it through Keerai Patti. Then Keerai Patti used to have a big *jata* (matted locks). When I afterwards came to live in Virupakshi Cave, she was living in the Guhai Namasivayar Temple and she had then removed all her hair. She lived in the *mantapam* there and used to worship the images of Namasivayar, etc., carved on the walls and pillars of the *mantapam*. The priest would come and worship the image inside. But she worshipped and offered food to the images on the wall in the *mantapam* where she lived. She would get up in the morning, go out for a stroll on the small hill, proceed towards the place where our Asramam is now and go round to where Skandasramam is and come down to her place. By that time she would have collected fuel, cow-dung, etc., and bundle them up behind her back; and in her lap she would have gathered a lot of green leaves of all sorts for cooking. She had only one pot. She would first boil water in that pot and bathe. In the same pot she would cook her rice, make her sauce, prepare any side dish such as the leaves she had brought, each by turns, offer the food to the images on the wall or pillar, bring them to me and then go and have her own meal. In the evening she would go into the town. There was not a house in the town which she did not know. She would go and ask for various things and get them. Coming to me, she would say, 'A good soul gave me a handful of broken rice. I have made porridge out of it.'

"But if one went and looked, there would be in her place various provisions and a big pot full of broken rice. That was the sort of woman she was. She was very fond of me. I also

used to go to her now and then. I would help her sometimes to gather green leaves, *e.g.*, from a drumstick tree. I would also help her sometimes in cleaning and plucking the leaves preparatory to their being cooked. Sometimes I used to stay there and eat with her." I asked Bhagavan when she died. He said, "She died before we came here. She was buried only here, opposite the Dakshinamurti Temple under a tamarind tree."

Soon after *parayana* was over, about 6-15 p.m., the monkeys (seeing that the window near Bhagavan at which they used to come and beg for fruits and nuts was closed) came near the doorway on the same side, and the ladies and children who wanted to go out of the hall by that doorway were frightened. In connection with this, Mr. Viswanatha Aiyar used the word *manthi* and said it denoted a male monkey. I said, "I believe it means the very reverse. See this from Pillai Perumal Aiyangar, '*மண்மூலந் தாவென்று மந்தி கடுவற்குரைப்ப*' (the *manthi* asked her mate to give her roots from the earth)." Thereupon Muruganar said, *manthi* is used generally to denote both sexes and especially to denote the female sex. Bhagavan quoted *மந்திகுறளை யொத்தேனில்லை* (I am not like the little one of a monkey) of Saint Pattinathar and said, "There evidently it must refer to the mother monkey" and went on to recollect one song from *Thiruppugazh* and another from Pattinathar's *உடற்கூற்று வண்ணம்* (*Udarkkotruvannam*) in which the word *manthi* occurs. These two songs were picked out at once. The first one is *Palani Vaguppu*. The portion referred to in it was read out by Bhagavan and explained to us. It is in praise of the fertility of Palani and says, "The *manthi* sitting on the areca-nut tree sees the flowers on the sandalwood trees nearby and, thinking they are hoods of snakes, jumps in fear on to another tree, and the branches so vacated, first bending down and then rising up strike against the fully ripe plantain fruits hanging in bunches in the plantain trees nearby and scatter the plantains, which in their turn fall on the jack fruits lying underneath and set flowing the

honey forming in them, so that the same honey released in huge quantities flows in streams and waters the adjoining forest of *shambaga* trees." All this was explained by Bhagavan. On previous occasions too I have heard Bhagavan give this as an example of our poets exaggerating the fertility of a country. The other lines in Pattinathar were also picked out. They are: *வருவது போவ தொருமுது கூனு மந்தி யெனும்படி குந்தி நடந்து, மதியு மிழந்து செவி திமிர் வந்து.* Bhagavan read this song right up to the end, reading the same according to the metre.

27-1-46 Morning

Krishnaswami returned this morning, as he had promised to do. Bhagavan was making kind enquiries about his trip to see Gandhiji at Madras. K. said there were huge crowds in the train and that he had to stand all the way from here to Madras, that there again there was a crowd of more than a lakh, that there was an ocean of cars parked at one corner, that anyhow through the kind offices of some of our friends he sat quite near Mahatma Gandhi with a 6-rupee ticket, that later all the crowd rushed in breaking the gates, that Gandhi refused to speak in any language except Hindi, and so on. Bhagavan said, "You have seen Gandhi. Now you know and have enjoyed the pleasure to be got out of such trips," and so saying he gave back the ticket with the remark, "Keep it safe. It is worth six rupees". K. also brought a number of photographs, big and small, presented to him by Dr. T.N.K., in many of which he and Bhagavan are found together. In this connection, Nagamma told Bhagavan that Viswanatha Iyer's mother wanted to see Bhagavan's pictures taken recently at Skandasramam. He ordered the album to be brought and shown to the lady and it was done.

K. told Bhagavan, "Dr. T.N.K. said he would send some medicines through me to Bhagavan, but I had no time even to meet him again and take them. T.P.R. will bring them." Bhagavan said, "Why medicines? What is wrong with me now? I am all

right. All this is unnecessary fuss. Why did you go and ask him to send me medicines?" K. said, "I did not ask. He himself said he would send them; and he is also planning to come and see Bhagavan." Bhagavan remarked, "He would have asked you, 'How is Bhagavan?' and you would have said something. Otherwise why should he send medicine?" K. said, "When one is asked like that, how can one keep quiet? We have to speak." K. also told Bhagavan, "Some of our friends wished to suggest to Mahatma Gandhi that he should visit our Asramam. But when they consulted Mr. O. P. Ramaswami Reddi, he said: 'Here none of us has any access to Mahatma Gandhi. Rajaji alone has influence'." Bhagavan thereupon said, "He won't be allowed to come to such places" (*அவாயெல்லாம் இங்கே யெல்லாம் வரவிடமாட்டா*). About a week ago, Bhagavan was mentioning that once the Mahatma came to this place, was near the cattle fair site (a furlong or less from our Asramam), finished his business there in less time than the time fixed for it, collected a purse and left the place. K. also brought news that the Mahatma told people that he was frequently thinking of Bhagavan and had great reverence for him. Bhagavan said, "Yes. Yes. That may be so. Whenever anybody tells him he has no peace of mind, he packs them off here, telling them, 'Go and stay at Ramanasramam for a time.' They come and tell us."

Later, after 10 a.m. Bhagavan was reading *Dinamani* and, coming across an article there on the temple at Perur (near Coimbatore), read it out to us and said, "It is news to me. We do not hear of this in the life of Sundaramurti or in the *Periyapuranam*. But it may be in the *Sthalapuranam*." This is the story: On a particular day in the year, the God and the Goddess are taken out to an adjoining field and the festival of the God and Goddess transplanting seedlings on behalf of a devotee is celebrated, in memory of the fact, that one day Sundaramurti Swami entered the temple and found to his dismay that neither God nor Goddess was there and that on

searching for them he found them in a field working at transplanting for this devotee, a Harijan.

28-1-46 Morning

Mr. P. B. Ray, who has been staying here for about a month now, has finished his Bengali life of Bhagavan. He read his dedication, translated into English, before Bhagavan, and said he had first heard of Bhagavan from somebody in Madras some years ago, and soon after, he began writing this life and it has taken him four years to complete this. Bhagavan said that long ago some Bengali had written a small life of his in a Bengali journal and that some more articles had also appeared in some Bengali papers or journals about him. Mr. Ray said he had written the two articles now mentioned by Bhagavan. Thereupon Bhagavan searched for the other Bengali article and traced it and gave it to Mr. Ray for perusal. It was in a journal called *Amrut* and published in 1934. The author of the article was Jagadishananda Swami of the Ramakrishna Mission. Mr. Ray perused it and told me in the evening that the article touched on all points, but somehow omitted to make any mention of the experience of Bhagavan arising from the idea of death and resulting in his Self-realisation, which happened at Madura before his coming here.

One Gokul Bhai, who was here recently, has written that he tried to bring Gandhiji here, but he found that Gandhiji peremptorily ordered that nothing at all should be added to his programme which was already too crowded. Bhagavan added, "They can't find time for all this."

29-1-46 Afternoon

Bhagavan took up the new edition of *Ramana Lila* (Telugu life of Bhagavan) and, casually opening it, came across odd stanzas composed by him, (like those about drinking water

before, during and after meals, and about those who run after *siddhis* being even worse than the magicians) and expressed surprise, "He has added all these in this edition. I have not seen it so far. When did he take all this and add it in this edition?"

While Bhagavan was still looking into this new edition, a visitor asked, "I came here about a year ago and ever since I have been trying to follow Bhagavan's instructions. I am not however succeeding very well. I try to look at all women as mothers. But I don't succeed." Bhagavan did not reply and the visitor continued, "While I am at home, it is all right. But when I go out and see women, I am not able to control my mind and am swept off my feet. What should I do?" He also added, "I want *atma sakshatkaram*; what should I do? I pray for Bhagavan's blessings." After a pause, Bhagavan replied, "You say you are all right when at home. Be at home, at home in the mind. Don't allow it to go outwards, but turn it inwards and keep it at home there. Then all will be well and you will have *atma sakshatkaram*. The trouble is we think we are the mind. See if we are the mind."

The visitor said, "I am a *grahasta*. Still I want to practise *brahmacharya* even with my wife. But I am not able to succeed. What should I do?" Bhagavan replied, "That is because of age-long *vasanas*. The *sankalpas* are so powerful because they have existed so long. But they will go."

30-1-46 Afternoon

Bhagavan was reading a letter from Mr. Appu Sastri, who had visited one Haridyal Maharaj living in a boat on the Ganges at Benares. The Maharaj (Swami) is reputed to be two hundred years old. In this connection, Bhagavan said, "When I was at Gurumurtham my nails had grown about an inch long and I had a long flowing *jata* (matted hair) and people used to talk I was very old in years, though so young in appearance, and that I had existed like that for centuries!"

The visitor (referred to in the last entry) told Bhagavan, "I am going back to my place this night. I have mentioned my difficulties."

Bhagavan: Yes. They will go gradually.

Visitor: I pray for Bhagavan's *kripa drishti*.

Bhagavan did not reply. Only a few minutes before this Colombo Ramachandra's two small girls had finished singing and almost the last song (composed by their father, an ardent and long-standing devotee) contained the lines — *கண்ணுலே பார்த்தவர்கள் கவலகற்றிக் கதிகாட்டும், அண்ணு மலேரமண அருட் குருவா யிருப்பவற்கு, மங்களம் மங்களமே* (He who remains at Annamalai as the gracious Guru who casts his glance on them, dissipates their sorrows and directs them to salvation).

Night

A visitor, Ananda Swami, brought a reprint from *The Hindu* of some date in 1940, in which Maurice Frydman (a devotee of Bhagavan for the last ten years) gives an account of how, under circumstances beyond suspicion of fraud, two women prayed, went into a sort of trance, and then got into their hands mysteriously and from nowhere some sugar candy and almonds. The Swami also mentioned that he had seen other instances himself like this where people received fruits, etc., and asked Bhagavan what could be the explanation of such occurrences. Bhagavan replied: "We hear of so many things. There are certain sects which work for such things. They may see or get such things. But who sees or gets them? You must see that. In the *Periyapuranam* also is mentioned a similar occurrence. A merchant sent his wife two mangoes saying he would eat them later with his meal. Before he returned from his business, a *sadhu* came saying he was very hungry and the wife, pitying him, gave him some rice, and, as she had nothing else ready to give with the rice, one of the mangoes. She hoped the husband would be

satisfied with only one mango. The husband returned later and during the meal asked for the mangoes, finished one and finding it very sweet asked for the other one also. The wife was in a fix, dreaded her husband's fury and went into the room where she had kept the two fruits before and prayed to God for help in this situation. And lo! One more fruit lay where she had kept the two fruits, and so she brought it and gave it to her husband. He ate it and found it much more delicious and giving him an ecstasy and *shanti* which he had never before known. So he pressed the wife to tell the truth about this fruit and got it out of her. In wonder and still a little incredulous, he asked his wife to pray for and get another fruit. The wife said she would try, and by God's grace got another fruit also. Then it dawned on him she was a saint and he prostrated himself before her and thinking it was sacrilege for him to treat her further as his wife, left the village, and went and lived in some other village. The wife after some time traced him out and thinking that, as he was her Lord, it was her duty to go to him, and it was for him to do what he liked with her, she went towards that village. The husband, getting scent of it, told the villagers there, 'A great saint is coming. We must receive her with due respect, ceremony and pomp, taking out a palanquin and music with drums, etc.' Thus he organised a big welcome and marching at the head of the reception party prostrated himself first before his wife.

"The wife did not know what to do. She shed the mortal body and lived in the astral body and eventually reached heaven taking her husband also there. The woman saint is Karaikkal Ammaiyar, whose story is found in *Periyapuranam*."

We also recalled an incident similar to that narrated by Frydman and this Ananda Swami, which occurred in Bhagavan's hall only a few months back, and which has been recorded in this diary. Then a Gujarati lady got sugar-candy in her palm after praying. At Mr. Balaram's request, the earlier volume of this diary was brought and Mr. B. read out the entry about the above

incident as it took place, along with the name and address of the lady who worked this miracle. Mr. Ramaswami Pillai, an old inmate of the Asramam condemned giving importance to such occurrences. He said, "I have seen more wonderful things, such as a person put inside a box and sawn asunder, and coming out whole. From such miracles all that I have learnt is that we should not trust our eyes, that we should never believe a thing to be real simply because our eyes say so." Bhagavan also added, "We see so many wonderful things done. The juggler puts a girl, tied fast, into a gunny bag and leaves it under a basket and the girl comes up from somewhere else when he calls her. There is such a thing as magic."

By this time it was time for our Tamil *parayana*. We began with the 29th stanza in *Ramana Deva Malai* (of Sivaprakasam Pillai) and by an odd coincidence it says, "Intellect or *buddhi* does not see reality on account of *maya*" and Bhagavan added in continuation of our discourse *எல்லாம் மாயையின் செயலே* (All is the work of *maya*), quoting Sivaprakasam Pillai's words.

31-1-46 Morning

About 8-30 a.m., *i.e.*, nearly half an hour after Dr. S. Rao had finished massaging Bhagavan's legs, Bhagavan said '*பிடிச்சுண்டிருக்கிறுப் போலிருக்குது, பார்த்தால் ஆளைக் காணேம்*' *i.e.*, 'it looks as if he is massaging. But when I look for the man, there is none.'

About 11 a.m. a visitor asked, "Bhagavan told me this morning 'Unless one knows the reality (*yathartham*), one cannot get peace (*shanti*).' What is that reality?"

Bhagavan: That which always is, is the reality. It is peace. Peace is another name for it.

Visitor: How to reach it or how to get peace?

Bhagavan: As I said already, that which is, is peace. All that we need do is to keep quiet. Peace is our real nature. We

spoil it. What is required is that we cease to spoil it. We are not going to create peace anew. There is space in a hall, for instance. We fill up the place with various articles. If we want space, all that we need do is to remove all those articles, and we get space. Similarly if we remove all the rubbish, all the thoughts, from our minds, the peace will become manifest. That which is obstructing the peace has to be removed. Peace is the only reality.

Afternoon

Bhagavan was going through the new edition of *Ramana Lila*. He feels many errors have been allowed to creep in, in this edition. Some are due to the proofs not having been properly looked into, Mr. Venkatakrishnaiah having been at that time suffering from bad eyesight. But some others are due to insufficient care in verifying facts. Bhagavan was trying to correct these, *e.g.*, he corrected 15 years into 5 years, in connection with Bhagavan's horoscope given in the book. He found the direction and location of the river Papaharanadi not accurate. Such mistakes go against Bhagavan's grain and so he patiently goes through the whole book to discover them. It is too much of a strain for him, especially with his bad eyesight.

1-2-46 Morning

The radio news announced the death of the Maharaja of Cochin. Bhagavan said, "Is he gone? We read of his illness!" I said "He must have been old!" Bhagavan said, "Yes. Another old person may be getting on the throne now. The one that has passed away got on the throne only a few years ago. Appan Thambiran (he had visited Bhagavan and written about him), if he were alive now, would have got the kingship. They have a long list of princes, awaiting succession." I said, "They are generally not only old but very learned and religious — these Rajas of Cochin." Bhagavan said, "Yes. They are generally well-read in Sanskrit. Even when Travancore threw open its

temples to Harijans, Cochin did not." Balaram said, "When I was reading at College, the 42nd prince of Cochin was reading with me. They have such a long list of heirs in succession." Attendant Krishnaswami asked Bhagavan if Cochin was a big State. Thereupon we talked about Cochin being small, though Pudukottah was smaller. Somebody said that Pudukottah became a State because its original owner betrayed his master and helped the British. From this, the talk drifted to உளமையன் (Oomaiyan) who was a terror to the English in those days, whom the English could not capture for a long time and who is said to have been finally captured with the help of the Pudukottah Paliagar. Bhagavan then said, "There is a fort at Dindigul. The front entrance used to be guarded and we boys were not allowed to enter in. We used to go to the farthest end of the wall, climb it, jump down into the fort and get out of the fort by a hole in the wall at the back of the fort, through which it was said Oomaiyan had escaped from the British. If we look at those walls now, we wonder how we climbed up and jumped down from them." Bhagavan continued to look at *Ramana Lila* and was discovering more mistakes.

Afternoon

Mr. G. Subba Rao read from *Ramana Lila* that Sankaracharya had told one of his disciples that Bhagavan was the third *avatar* of Subrahmanya, the first one having been Kumarila Bhattar and the second Jnana Sambandhar, and asked Bhagavan to whom it was Sankaracharya said so, Bhagavan did not know. But he said that Sankaracharya must be the one before the last, *i.e.*, the third back from the present one. Bhagavan also added, "That Sankaracharya came and met me at Skandasramam. He must have been repeating what he heard. It is only Nayana that started it. None said so before." Bhagavan came across in *Ramana Lila* Venkata Krishnayya's poetic description of Bhagavan's travel from Madura, that in the

vimanam of his body he was traversing *daharakasha* or *chit akasa* and read it out to us. This reminded him of certain incidents in the past here and he said, "Once when we were at Skandasramam, in the month of *Thai*, we set out in a party of forty or fifty for going round the Hill one night. We all had a heavy meal before starting, with *puri*, etc., and tea on top. They had taken in addition *marundu* (*lehyam* with opium in it as an ingredient). By the time we came near here, a Namboodri, Atmananda Swami, began saying, 'I feel I am floating on *kshira sagara* and that a ship is taking me along that ocean'. Another said he felt that he was in the air flying in an aeroplane. Like that, Venkata Krishnayya says I was travelling in *daharakasa*!" Meanwhile Ramanatha Dikshitar came into the hall (he has been with Bhagavan since 1912) and Bhagavan said, on seeing him, "He must have been with us on that occasion. On another occasion, when we were at Virupakshi Cave, we had set out to go round the Hill and Chidambaram Subrahmanya Sastri was the leader of the party. When we came somewhere near here, he proposed that each one should lecture for an hour going round the Hill, on *Guru Bhakti* and Ramanathan's was the first turn. They had all taken *marundhu* (*i.e*., ganja). R. began his lecture and elaborated his theme that Tiruvannamalai and Ramana, Chidambaram and Nataraja, and the body and the Self are the same and went on elaborating the theme and addressing ingenious arguments in support of the same with such fervour and spirit that he far exceeded his time limit. When he was asked to stop, he pleaded piteously for a little more time. So he was allowed to continue. Even after he had taken two hours he would not finish and he had to be stopped and another was asked to speak. It was wonderful the way R. spoke. None would have expected it of him. It was the next day he composed the song '*திருச்சுழி நாதனைக் கண்டேனே*'. Mr. Balaram came across a passage in *Ramana Lila* in which it was mentioned that once at Virupakshi Cave Bhagavan alone was present and was working at putting up a small wall and

that when some visitor came there and asked Bhagavan where was the Swami, Bhagavan told him "Swami has gone out." Balaram asked Bhagavan "Is it so?" Bhagavan said "Yes". Reading further on, Balaram came across the statement that the man stayed a little and not finding any Swami returning went away, that he came again on the third day, that then too he stayed a little and finding none other than Bhagavan, was returning, that while returning he met Echamma and was told by her his Swami was none other than the one he saw at Virupakshi Cave that day and the previous occasion, that Echamma later asked Bhagavan whether it was proper for him to have misled the man like that and that Bhagavan replied to her, "Do you want me to go about with a bell round my neck announcing 'I am the Swami' or to have a label on my forehead that I am the Swami?"

This led Bhagavan to talk of his early days, how when he went about with only an old cod-piece and a small, tattered towel, it was naturally not easy for anyone to think of him as a Swami. He said, "When I was at Pachaiamman Koil I had a small towel which was tattered and torn, almost to rags, with threads having come out in most places. Once a cow-herd boy made fun of this torn rag, by telling me, 'The governor wants this towel'. I replied, 'Tell him I won't give it to him!' I never used to spread it out in public. I used to keep it rolled into a ball and wipe my body, hands or mouth as the occasion demanded with the towel so rolled up into a ball. I used to wash it and dry it in a place between two rocks, which place was never visited by any of those who were with me. Even my cod-piece would be tattered. When the top end used to become worn out, I would reverse the cod-piece and use it with the bottom end topmost. When going into the forest I would secretly mend my cod-piece with thread taken out of it with prickly pear thorn for needle. So, nobody knew or suspected the wretched state of my towel and cod-piece. One day somehow, one of those who used to be with me in those days went to the place where I used

to dry my clothes and thus by chance discovered the state of my clothes. They then wept that they had allowed such a state of things, that they had committed an inexcusable sacrilege (*apachara*) and so on. They had with them, in trunks, whole pieces of cloth and so many towels, etc., all meant by them to be used for me. Only they did not know how badly torn my towel and cod-piece were; otherwise they would have long ago substituted others for them." He added, "Our Muruganar has mentioned these facts in his songs and has described that I had Indra for my towel, (*i.e*., a towel with thousand eyelets or holes) and a cod-piece stitched by means of a prickly pear spike. But one who does not know the facts may not be able to understand what exactly the poet meant." He also told us two stories from the life of Saint Sundaramurti. In one the saint was doing worship with climbing brinjal (தூதுவளை) leaves, while others took it he was preparing them for cooking. In the other, one Somayajulu got the saint's help through those leaves and secured the presence of Siva at his *yagna*.

2-2-46 Morning

A visitor told Bhagavan that he was working for Harijan uplift, that he and his co-workers in the cause had *darshan* of Mahatma Gandhi and got his blessings, that Mahatma Gandhi told them that if they could bring about marriages between Harijan girls and higher caste gentlemen, such marriages would have his blessings; and that he (visitor) would like to have Bhagavan's views in the matter. Bhagavan said, "If Mahatma Gandhi has said so, we will all hear what he has said. What more is there for us to do? He is a distinguished man and is working in that field. What have we to do with that?" Turning to us, Bhagavan added, "If I open my mouth, something will appear in the papers that so-and-so has also said such-and-such a thing. The next day there will be people to criticise it. Our business is to keep quiet. If we enter into all these, people will naturally ask, and justifiably, 'Why is he interfering in all these instead of keeping quiet?' Similarly

if Mahatma Gandhi keeps quiet leaving aside all his activities, they will ask, 'Why is he keeping quiet instead of engaging in all these activities?' He must do what he has come for. We must do what we have come for."

One Ananda Swami, from Mount Abu, put questions and got the following answers:

Question: It is said in books that the *purusha* is *angushtha pramana*. What is it that is meant by it?

Answer: Evidently the books must be referring to the *upadhi* in which the *purusha* is manifesting. They cannot mean that the all-pervading *purusha* is *angushtha pramana*.

Question: Is that *purusha* in the heart?

Answer: If you mean the physical heart, it cannot be. But the books describe a heart which is an inverted lotus with a cavity inside and a flame in that cavity and all that. In such a psychic heart, the *purusha* may be said to abide and the flame may be of that *angushtha pramana*.

Question: Is seeing that light Self-realisation?

Answer: Abiding in it and being it, not seeing it, is Self-realisation.

Question: In *nirvikalpa samadhi* what happens to the *prana*?

Answer: It goes and merges where it came from.

Question: I wish to know if there will be breathing then.

Answer: It may not be then in the form of respiration, but in some *sukshma* form. They talk of *maha prana*.

Question: What is *sahaja samadhi*?

Answer: It is our *svabhava sthiti*. It is being in our natural state. *Nirvikalpa samadhi* also means merely giving up our *vikalpas*. *Samadhi* is our natural state, if we give up the *vikalpas*.

Question: What is the difference between *sushupti ananda* and *turiya ananda*?

Answer: There are not different *anandas*. There is only one *ananda* including the *ananda* enjoyed during the waking state, the *ananda*, of all kinds of beings from the lowest animal to the highest Brahma, the *ananda* of the Self. The bliss which is enjoyed unconsciously in sleep is enjoyed consciously in *turiya*. That is the difference. The *ananda* enjoyed during *jagrat* is *upadhi ananda*.

During the greater part of the afternoon Bhagavan was perusing a note book in which Venkatesa Sastriar had gathered together all the sayings of Ribhu found in the Upanishads.

3-2-46 Morning

The radio news announced that four to five lakhs of people had assembled to meet Mahatma Gandhi at Madura. Bhagavan said, "Where is the place to hold such a crowd? Perhaps, on the way to Alagar temple." This led Bhagavan to think of his old days in Madura and he said, "I had a relation, a sort of uncle, who was *manigar* in that temple. So I used to go there now and then, and we used to get all respect and attention there. They used to make very nice *pongal prasad* there, with a lot of ghee. Once they gave such *prasad* in a big brass plate and, as there was none else, I carried it all the way, nearly two miles, to that uncle's village. But I found the people in the house did not after all care so much for it, but gave away most of it to their servants. They were so used to it that it did not attract them. I used to go and play in the premises of that temple. There are various buildings round about the temple which, though neglected and in ruins now, were used by the Nayak Kings. Tirumal Nayak is said to have lived there too. In those days these Rajas used to fortify their hills and live there. See Ginjee for instance. The Ginjee fort was built on three hills. They are all in ruins. Padaiveedu nearby in this district was once a great

city. Hampi was a great city and the capital of an empire. It is said that the town was built on the model of a Sri Chakra and that there had been some slight mistake somewhere, and that is why, though the empire flourished well for a time, it did not endure but failed. There is a rumour that a prophecy made by Vidyaranya, earlier a Dewan of Hampi empire and later a Sankaracharya, has declared that when again a descendant of that empire or a successor of his in the mutt builds a city on the model of Sri Chakra, a great empire will again flourish with that city as capital. Some people have even thought that the present Sankaracharya might be the person meant for such destiny. Our Nayana used to feel that as this town is by nature itself built on Sri Chakra model, by the gods themselves, if only we could build houses all round the hill and make a city of it, this will become the capital of a big empire. He used to be always thinking and speaking of *swaraj*, dreaming and planning for it and saying what he would do when *swaraj* is attained. People say there was a town in the old, old days somewhere here to the south of the hill. Who knows what will happen hereafter? Did we imagine that all these houses now here were going to be built?"

Bhagavan also said Alagar Temple was regarded by the Saivites as a temple of Muruga (Lord Subrahmanya), even as the Tirupati Temple, and that it was one of the six *padai veedus* (படை வீடு) of Muruga.

Afternoon

Bhagavan was reading the *sthala purana* of Tiruchuzhi, to see how the portion connecting saint Sundaramurti with the shrine is dealt with. He was explaining it here and there to us, and while reading various passages extolling the saint, Bhagavan could hardly proceed, being so choked with emotion. At least a dozen times he was so choked and he had to control himself and then proceed.

4-2-46

Last night Bhagavan read in Tiruchuzhi *sthala purana* that God appeared as Kalaiyar before Sundaramurti at Tiruchuzhi and asked him to come to Kanaperur. This word, *kalai* might mean either a bull or metaphorically a young and vigorous man. The book further said he appeared with a bouquet in his hand and weapon called *chuzhiyam* (trident). To clear the doubt Bhagavan said it would be better to look into the *sthala purana* of that Kanaperur if that could be had. Muruganar said that he had presented a copy of that book to our library. So it was at once picked out and given to Bhagavan, who went through the book. This afternoon again he was reading the book. The doubt could not be cleared, as almost the same words are used in this book also. He read out some portions to us and particularly the *Sundaramurti Padalam* in which the following incident, not generally known, is also given. It seems when Siva appeared as 'Kalaiyar' and asked Saint Sundarar, "Why have you not sung on us? We live at Kanaperur," the Saint began to sing even at Tiruchuzhi where he then was and went on singing towards Kanaperur. On the way he stopped at Tirupunaivasal. There the God and Goddess came to Sundaramurti as an old man and his wife and asked him for food, saying they were very hungry. He cooked some food in haste for them, but when it was ready the guests could not be found. Sundaramurti searched for them in the village, but could not trace them. When he returned home, he found the food got ready had also disappeared. Then Sundaramurti thought this the Lord's *lila*. And a voice said, "What are you doing here instead of coming to us at Kanaperur?" Sundaramurti replied, "What am I to do? You go and live in some forest. I hardly know the proper way to it." The voice added, "I shall be going on my bull in front of you. Follow the bull's footsteps." So Sundramurti followed them for some time. After a while the footsteps could not be found. Sundaramurti prayed again; and again the footsteps were seen

and followed. After some distance the footsteps ceased and wherever he saw there were *lingams*. All was *linga maya, jyoti maya*. However, Sundaramurti advanced in one direction and then he espied the *vimanam* of the temple.

He and his party washed in the tank outside and wanted to enter in the temple and lo! the temple disappeared. Then Sundaramurti thought within himself, "Is it because I did not come here first that my Lord is displeased with me?" and began to pray. Thereupon the crests of the *vimanam* appeared one by one and the temple was there. Bhagavan narrated all this to us and turned to Saint Sundarar's *Thevaram* on this shrine to see whether the last mentioned sentiment and prayer were to be found there. They were not found. But Bhagavan read out the *Thevaram* and more than once, identifying himself with the *bhava* of those songs, was greatly moved and choked with emotion. But he did not lay aside the book as he sometimes does when overpowered by emotion, but controlled himself with great effort and finished the whole *Thevaram*. He particularly pointed out the lines in which the saint has said God is like nectar to those who meditate on him in reality in their hearts transcending all *bhava* (பாவனாதீதம்) and also the lines where the saint calls God, his friend, lord and Master. He laid aside the book and soon after Muruganar entered the hall Bhagavan said, 'He comes now'; and I explained to Muruganar why Bhagavan said so. Soon after, Bhagavan began telling Muruganar almost the entire story I have recorded above.

This afternoon Mrs. Taleyarkhan said, "Bhagavan, I must report the experience I had at Tirukoilur. Though I have gone to Tirukoilur many times before, I had not so far seen the temples etc., visited by Bhagavan. So, I made it a point to visit them all this time, and purposely took our Viswanath with me to show me all the places. We first went to the Araiyani Nallur temple. It was about 8 a.m. when we reached the temple on 2-2-46. I found to my dismay the huge doors of the temple locked with a

big lock. There was not a person to be seen either inside or outside the temple. I did not know what to do. I was praying earnestly to Bhagavan that I must somehow see all the temples and the several places therein connected with Bhagavan's first journey. Viswanath told me, 'Let us go round the outer *prakara* and then see what is to be done'. So I started going round with him. But I was all along praying hard to Bhagavan in my heart that I should not be sent back disappointed and that I must fulfil the object of my visit. As we were coming round, I saw at one place some water and milk trickling down from inside the temple and I told Viswanath there must be somebody inside the temple. But Viswanath said it might be *abishekam* water trickling down. When I was turning round the fourth corner, what was my surprise to find the door slightly ajar, as if somebody was asking us to come in quietly on the sly. We finished the round and entered the temple. We found an old priest with a loveable face inside. He, however, did not speak even a word with us throughout our stay there. He did *arathi*, *archana*, everything for us and at our request lighted a lamp and showed us all the places as it was dark there. We came out and went round the temple again. By the time we finished our round, the doors had been again locked up and the old man gone. I feel it was only Bhagavan's grace that opened the doors and gave us *darshan* that day." Bhagavan asked Viswanath, "Did you enquire and find out who that old man was?" Viswanath replied, "No. I did not."

5-2-46

Bhagavan has been reading the *Kalaiyarkoil Puranam* and explaining to us various portions therein, both in the morning and in the afternoon. He was so absorbed in the songs and the story that he went on explaining to us this morning even after the papers arrived. Attendant Krishnaswami, who was chagrined that he had been denied his usual listening to the radio, remarked, 'To such stories, if Bhagavan takes them

up, there will be no end at all'. He thought he was rebuking us who were listening and thus in a way encouraging Bhagavan to speak on. He could not understand the pleasures of a literary excursion such as Bhagavan was having and which one likes to share with others. Bhagavan was explaining to us how the poet was showing his skill and how a single stanza might have cost the poet several days of anxious thought.

6-2-46 Morning

Last night Rajaratna Mudaliar, who was Deputy Collector here and was leaving for Cuddalore on transfer, came to Bhagavan to take leave. As requested by me, he had secured a copy of the songs, conversation, etc., used by the temple priests in connection with the *ஊடல்* (love quarrel) between the God and Goddess which is celebrated in the festival called here *ஊடல் உற்சவம்* and gave it to me. I left the same with Bhagavan last night for his perusal. When I entered the hall at about 7-45 a.m., Bhagavan was reading the above and explaining the same to those near him. Seeing me enter, Bhagavan said, 'You are coming only now?' After finishing the point he was explaining just then, he again for my benefit started reading and explaining from the beginning and read on to the end. We found the copy secured by Mr. Rajaratnam was not complete. I promised to find out whether there was anything with the temple priests not included in the copy sent to me.

Today, between 10 and 1l a.m., the foundation was laid for Bhagavan's new hall in front of the temple and Bhagavan attended the function. The *sthapathi* in charge (Sri Vaidyanatha Sthapathi) of the work made a short speech in which he said that it was his aim and endeavour to see the entire work finished in one year and that he wanted the co-operation and goodwill of all Bhagavan's devotees. A number of devotees also subscribed various sums. First a widow came and offered some money to *Sarvadhikari*. He took it and put it on a plate on the

ground, saying 'This sum, the lady is offering as her contribution'. Thereupon various devotees began putting down various sums. I guess the amount offered on the spot could not have been less than Rs. 2,000. A radio singer, hailing from Tirukoilur, sang a few songs in praise of Bhagavan and the function ended with a feast for us, the inmates.

Afternoon

Bhagavan has read by now a great portion of the book of Kalaiyarkoil shrine and he is of opinion that 'Kalaiyar' means only a young and robust man and not a bull, *i.e*., he appeared before Saint Sundara as a young man near Tiruchuzhi.

Night

After *parayana*, a person came and told Bhagavan, "we are going to our village tomorrow morning." Bhagavan said 'Yes' and the person left. Turning to the attendant, Bhagavan said "அவர்களுக்குக் கொடுத்தாச்சா?" (Have they been given?). The attendant went out, enquired, came back and reported, "They have not yet been given. But things have been reserved to be given to them." I was wondering what all this was about. Bhagavan told me, "There was one Annamalai Swami when I was at the Asramam on the hill (*i.e*.; Skandasramam). He died in *Thai* of 1922 and was buried near Eesanya *math.* This is his Guru *puja* or death anniversary. His relations come and celebrate it every year. They feed poor people there and leave some rice, etc., here. We give them our *prasadam* (*vadai, pongal*, etc.). It is usual to sing the songs composed by that Annamalai Swami on such Guru *puja* days, with our Tamil *parayana*. I don't know what they propose to do today." I said, "If that has been the custom, we shall certainly do the same today. Why should there be any doubt about it?" Meanwhile Balaram asked Bhagavan who that Annamalai Swami was. Bhagavan thereupon took out the life of Bhagavan brought out by Kamath with 111

illustrations and showed us a group photo in which that Annamalai Swami is standing at the right hand end of the picture. Bhagavan said, "Mother used to be very fond of him. He died in *Thai*. She passed away in *Vaikasi*." We all remarked, on seeing the picture, that Bhagavan was very thin and lean in it. Bhagavan said, "That is because I was then living on one meal a day. For something like a year I was eating only one meal a day. But this condition of mine in the picture is nothing. You should have seen me at Gurumurtham. I was only skin and bone, no flesh anywhere. All the bones were sticking out, collar bone, ribs, and the hip bones. There was no stomach to be seen. It was sticking to the back, having receded so far. So this condition in the picture is not really so bad." We asked Bhagavan when this picture was taken. He said it was about *Jayanti* time in 1921. From this the talk drifted to when Bhagavan was first photographed here. Thereupon he said, "It was in 1900 or 1901. The Government brought a photographer to take photos of some prisoners here. There were no photographers here then. This photographer was a disciple of Kumbakonam Mauna Swami and had, it seems, heard of me. So he took advantage of his trip here to visit me. He gave us a photo of his Kumbakonam Mauna Swami and took my photo. The first group photo taken was in 1906 or so. We were six in it. I, Palaniswami, Sivayya (he had not then become Mauna Swami of Courtallam), Pachai Pillai (who was Sanitary Inspector here then), Rangaswami Aiyangar (Best & Co.'s agent) and Overseer Sesha Iyer. No copy of this is available. The Aiyangar's family may have one. We have not been able to find out." At this stage Mrs. Taleyarkhan asked Bhagavan, "Is there no photo of Bhagavan as a child?" Bhagavan said, "In those days there were no photographers in places like Tiruchuzhi. But when I was about seven or eight years old a European photographer came there to take a group photo of the Sub-Magistrate and others at Tiruchuzhi. He was staying behind the hospital. After he had taken a group photo of the Sub-Magistrate, my uncle Nelliappa Aiyar wanted to have a

photo of his taken. He liked to have me also by his side in this picture. So I was sent for from the school.

"I came in haste, just as I was, with my high forehead (*i.e.*, the top of my head projecting upward) clean-shaven recently, almost hiding the tuft behind, my *jibba* hanging loosely about me, with no buttons, and all unprepared generally for being snapped. By the time I arrived, my uncle was sitting in a chair in the hospital compound, where there were crotons for a good background and the photographer was busy adjusting his camera. I was made to stand to the left of my uncle, with my right hand on the left arm of my uncle's chair. A big book from the hospital was brought and I was asked to hold it in my armpit on the left side. So placed, I was to be snapped. But as ill-luck would have it, just as the photo was about to be taken, a fly sat on my face, and I raised my hand to chase away the fly, with the result that in the photo my right hand could be seen swaying in the air. We have not been able to get at this picture either. There was no other photo taken of me in my childhood or boyhood."

10-2-46

About 10-30 a.m. Mr. T.K. Doraiswamy Iyer (a Retired Professor who has settled down here for Bhagavan's sake) showed a letter he had received from Sir S. Radhakrishnan, in reply to his letter asking for an article for the Souvenir which it is proposed to bring out to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of Bhagavan's arrival in Tiruvannamalai. Sir S.R. has also been requested to get in touch with Mr. Evans Wentz and get a contribution from him also for the Souvenir. In the reply Sir S.R. had said he would do that also. Bhagavan showed Balaram this Evans Wentz in a group photo in *Self Realisation.* In this group Grant Duff is sitting to the left of Bhagavan and Evans Wentz to the right.

Bhagavan said that it was S.R. that sent Grant Duff here. In his introduction to *Five Hymns* Grant Duff confirms the above fact, though Sir S. Radhakrishnan's name is not mentioned.

Afternoon

I was reading Nallaswami Pillai's *Sivajnanabhodam* and came across a sentence challenging anybody to show in any *purana* that Siva took birth as *avatar* anywhere. I asked Bhagavan if it was not said that Siva was born as son to Vallala Maharaja in this place, and was even supposed to do annual ceremony every year to Vallala Maharaja. Bhagavan then explained that Siva was not born in any woman's womb even according to that story, that when Vallala's wife approached Siva, who had come as an old man, according to her husband's orders, she found the old man suddenly transformed into a male child; and that when she called her husband and both tried to take the child, the child disappeared and the God then assured Vallala that he himself would perform funeral rites and annual ceremonies for him. In this connection Bhagavan also narrated to me another story in *Tiruvilaiyadal Puranam* in which God appeared first as an old man, then changed into a young man, and finally into a child. The story is to be found in *Vriddha, Kumara, Bala Padalam*.

A visitor, an old devotee of Bhagavan, had brought with him a book called *Ramanopakhyanam* by one Thangavelu Nadar. I imagined from the title that the book dealt with Bhagavan's life and teachings. But Bhagavan told me it contained only the stanzas found in some *nadi* horoscope of Bhagavan, with the notes or commentary of a gentleman who was then editing a Tamil paper. He added that, besides this version, some other *nadi* versions of Bhagavan's horoscope have been traced and sent to the Asramam by different devotees. I thereupon remarked, "But it is said these so-called *nadi* horoscopes are not all quite correct on all points!" Bhagavan said, "Various people in various parts of the country claim to have various *nadis*. We don't know. This Thangavelu Nadar was originally at Kumbakonam. There used to be one at Tindivanam. When anybody went to him, he used to tell them, 'You must go and have *darshan* of Ramana Maharshi, at such and such a time. The same is indicated in the *nadi* horoscope';

and they used to come here and tell me about it. When I was at Skandasramam, Jadaswami came across some person who was said to be a great expert in reading one's palm and tracing one's horoscope from there. He seems to have read Jadaswami's horoscope in that way, and Jadaswami had apparently been greatly impressed. So, he brought the palmist to me and said, 'This is a great expert in this line. Even if we spend a great deal of money, we will not be able to get his services. All his readings are correct. It is fortunate he has come our way. I have brought him to you. Please show him your palm. He will tell all your future.' I declined. He tried to persuade me. But I never showed my palm and I told him, 'We have not understood the present. Why should we seek to know the future?'"

11-2-46 Morning

My old servant Divakaran came with me. As Bhagavan did not seem to recognise him, I reminded Bhagavan about him and told him he was now employed in Cochin, near his native village. This led to talk of Cochin State and Bhagavan said that Madhavi Amma (wife of Dr. P.C. Nambiar) had written that the present Maharaja was her daughter Janaki's father-in-law. I added, "Prabhavati (a princess of Devas, who used to be here and has now married one Mr. Sekharan of Dr. Pandalai's family) is connected with the Travancore State. So, we are now connected with both the States."

Bhagavan said, "Yes, yes. Even before this marriage, through Mrs. Pandalai, now through Prabhavati also."

Afternoon

On further reading of the *Kalaiyarkoil Puranam*, Bhagavan told us, "It was not at Tirupunaivasal that God and Goddess appeared to Saint Sundarar as an old man and his wife. I find it was at Tiruchuzhi itself. After having been asked by God to come to Kanaperur, it seems Saint Sundarar was thinking of

going to Tirupunaivasal, possibly because he thought he had to go that way to reach Kanaperur. It was then that Sundarar met that old gentleman and his wife who mysteriously disappeared and also heard the Voice (*asariri*)." Bhagavan also sent for the book in the library which gives a map of all the places of pilgrimage, etc., and found that Tirupunaivasal is east of Kanaperur and situated on the sea coast. Bhagavan had asked Viswanath to add to his Tamil manuscripts of *Tiruchuzhi Thala Mahimai* an account of *Sundaramurti Padalam*. Mr. Viswanath had written out an account accordingly to be added to the manuscript. Bhagavan perused it and suggested some improvements.

12-2-46

A party of about fifty, mostly ladies, clad in ochre coloured saris and said to belong to the Satchidananda Asramam at Cocanada, arrived with their Guru, Rama Lakshmamma, and attended the morning *parayana*.

Afternoon

Nagamma read her Telugu version of Kalaiyarkoil story in *Sundaramurti Padalam*, and Bhagavan was listening and correcting where necessary. After it was read out, when Viswanath came in, Bhagavan suggested that a copy of the stanzas in the above *Padalam* must be made and kept in the *Tiruchuzhi Puranam* for reference. Bhagavan had already copied a few stanzas with the above object. Viswanath said he would complete it.

Evening

The Cocanada party again attended *parayana* in the hall and afterwards recited *Siva Stotra* and *Siva Mahima Stotra* in Sanskrit.

13-2-46 Morning

After *parayana*, Bhagavan was talking to a bearded gentleman past middle age and yet looking sturdy and strong. I went and sat by the side of the visitor. Bhagavan told me, "This is Gajanan, alias Daivarata, the answers to whose questions have been recorded in Chapter III of *Ramana Gita*. He was with us at Skandasramam in 1917." I thereupon said, "I know. The same who was in Nepal and whose photo and letter arrived immediately after Bhagavan was making enquiries about him once." For the benefit of those who might not know the incident, Bhagavan said, "Some years ago, when Nayana's son Mahadevan came here, I was enquiring about this Gajanan. We had not heard from him for about ten years. So I was making enquiries. When we were talking, the post arrived and with it a parcel of books. I perused the letters first and laid aside the parcel. When we were talking about this G., the parcel was by my side. After talking to Mahadevan, I opened the parcel and found G's letter and photo and books, and in the letter he had written that, though he was in Nepal, yet he was always at my feet. It looked as if, in answer to my question to Mahadevan as to where G. was, G. was saying, 'Here I am (*i.e.*, in the picture) at your very feet'."

The Cocanada party requested Bhagavan to give them *hastha diksha*, or to permit them to touch his feet. Bhagavan only replied as usual, 'Touch with your mind'.

At breakfast, Bhagavan enquired where G. was staying and what he was going to take. It was reported G. had gone for his bath. Bhagavan then said, "He would eat anything. If you give him a quantity of tender *margosa* leaves and a *chembu* of cow's urine, he would breakfast on them. He had lived on things like that."

About 10-30 a.m. G. was in the hall showing a picture of a Pasupati image in Nepal and explaining its esoteric

significance. A Swami in orange robes, called Jagadiswarananda, from Ujjain arrived this morning and a little after, the letter announcing his coming here, reached Bhagavan. The person was here before the letter.

In the night again G. was telling Bhagavan about Nepal. He said, among other things, "There are three important shrines in Nepal, all very sacred. The King is a very religious man and it is the custom and tradition there for the King not to do anything or go anywhere without first going and taking permission from the gods in these temples. In that State, cow-killing used to be punished with death sentence. Now the sentence is transportation for life. If a bull is beaten and blood appears, the offender will be punished with imprisonment for three months or so. The State has its own coins." Here G. showed some coins to Bhagavan. Mr. Balaram said, "He does *bhajan* with great spirit and enthusiasm. We should have it one day here." G. said, "Oh, yes. I can do even now. No fear, no shyness. So I can sing away. Can we get some tinkling beads (*கஜ்ஜை*) for my ankles, and some accompaniment?" Bhagavan also said, "He must have some *sruti* like harmonium, some accompaniment like *mridangam* or *ganjira* and some cymbals (jalra)." Then the talk drifted to Bhagavan and his party going round the hill in those days. Balaram asked if G. used to do these *bhajans* while resting on the way or during walking. Bhagavan replied, "Oh, he would do his *bhajan* while walking. He would jump from one side of the road to another. He was so full of life and enthusiasm." G. said, "I was much younger then. But I can do it even now." Discussing where and when we should arrange for such a *bhajan* by G. we found out that he would require a big space himself for moving about singing and that it would be better to arrange it in the dining hall.

14-2-46

In the morning post was received a letter written in French and Mr. Balaram translated it into English for Bhagavan. It is

from the editors of the journal called *Spirituality*, which during the war penetrated all the prisoners' camps in Germany. They have published a book of about 600 pages called *Reconstruction of Man*. They say that their view is similar to Bhagavan's; they also hold that man in his egoless state, far from losing himself in a void, finds himself as he has always been in his profoundest depths. They say they belong to the Vedic brotherhood of Prajapatis. They hope to go to India next year and to visit Tiruvannamalai and Pondicherry.

In the afternoon a visitor sang some Tamil *Thevarams*, etc. After *parayana* in the evening, Bhagavan's old disciple Gajanan gave us a *bhajan* performance in the dining hall between 6-30 p.m. and 7-30 p.m. with Bhagavan seated at his usual place there. The *bhajan* was in North Indian style; and the way he ran and jumped about was remarkable for one who is at least fifty years old.

15-2-46

Mr. Ramaswami Iyengar of Kumbakonam, who was staying at Palakottu, passed away this morning at about 2 a.m.; and Kunjuswami informed Bhagavan of the same at once. R. passed away with Bhagavan's name on his lips.

Bhagavan made kind enquiries about Colombo Ramachandra's health, as he had been suffering from sciatica for about a week now, and was taken to the Doctor in the Government Hospital last evening. Among the letters received today was one from a lady, Kameswaramma, in which she asked for Bhagavan's opinion on the question whether the body can be kept alive eternally. While perusing the letter, Bhagavan made a few remarks and this led to questions from visitors. Bhagavan repeated his well-known views on the subject, more or less to the following effect: "As this lady writes, some have maintained that the body can be made immortal and they give recipes,

medical and other, for perfecting this body and making it defy death. The Siddha school (as it is known in the south) has believed in such a doctrine. Venkaswami Rao in Kumbakonam started a school which believed the same. There is a Society in Pondicherry too. There is also the school which believes in transforming men into supermen by descent of Divine Power, as is mentioned in this letter. But all people, after writing long treatises on the indestructibility of their body, after giving medical recipes and yogic practices to perfect the body and keep it alive for ever, pass away one day!" Somebody raised this question, "What then about those who are spoken of as *chiranjivis* in our books?" Bhagavan replied, "But do they appear in physical bodies? They only appear to you in your *dhyana*." From this the talk drifted to whether they have individuality and Bhagavan said, "As long as you have individuality, you can see individuality in them, not afterwards!"

In the night Gajanan (Daivarata) said to Bhagavan, "When Nayana went to Gokarnam he went almost to every house and offered his superb *vidya* to everyone. But nobody cared for it then. But now, they come across a verse of his and they go into raptures over it, and exclaim 'What poetic gift!' and if they can get a picture of him they worship it as God. This seems to have been the way of the world always. There is a story about Maschendra Nath. It is said he went about saying, 'For two *pooran polies* (பூரண போளி) I shall give you *Brahmam i.e., jnana*.' But nobody cared. At last Goraknath came along and when he heard this offer of M., he said he would bring the *polies*. He went into the city, got up a tall tree, hung from one of the branches head downwards, had a small fire lit up underneath, and made a *chela* or disciple sit by his side. The whole town swarmed around and wondered saying, 'What great *tapasya*! Some great Mahatma has come to our place!' People readily offered to do various services and present many things to the great *tapasvi*. The disciple explained that his Master would

only accept a *bhiksha* in which a thousand persons should all be fed with the best *pooran polies*. This was readily arranged and Goraknath took two *polies* and ran up to Maschendra, telling the people, 'You feed the thousand persons. I shall go to the Ganges and offer the *polies* to Ganga.' G. told M., 'Here Sir, I have brought the two *polies*. Now give me *Brahmam*!' M. took the two *polies*, bit them here and there, threw the pieces to the birds, dogs and the river, and then both M. and G. disappeared. M. had given G. *Brahmam*.

"It seems to have been the way of the world always. Great men are rarely respected and rated at their true worth in their lives. Even Sankara was bitterly attacked during his lifetime as a *maya asura*. But now he is regarded not only here, but all over the world, as the greatest religious and philosophical thinker the world has produced!" Bhagavan said, "There is another similarity between Sankara and Maschendra Nath. It is said of Maschendra also that he was enjoying the company of a woman and forgot to return at the end of the period fixed by him, and that thereupon his disciple Goraknath went and sang and reminded him and brought him back, in the same way in which Sankara's disciples are said to have sung *Guru stuti* and brought back Sankara." Gajanan proceeded to relate that Goraknath was greatly revered in Nepal, from the King downward, and the State coin also bore the name of Goraknath. He said, "It seems, when Goraknath was alive, the then King of Nepal visited him. When G. was apprised of the King's arrival, he merely spat on the King. The King, to avert the spittle falling on his crown, drew back a little; the spittle fell on his feet. G. is said to have then told the King, 'You would not let the spittle fall on your head. If it had so fallen, you might have become the head of a big empire. However, as it fell on your feet, you would be the master of a small kingdom'."

The talk then drifted to miracles done by various saints. G. mentioned one Vasudeva Saraswati and said, "He has gone

all over India. Bhagavan knows him. He was here too. He did various miracles. One morning he would bathe in the Krishna and at noon he would be found bathing in the Ganges at Benares and at a third place in the evening!" Then G. proceeded to speak of Samartha Rama Das and his miracles, and told the following story: "It seems one of his disciples, greatly devoted to him, used to grind the betel leaves and nut in his own mouth first and then offer it to Ramdas. Some co-disciples thought this sacrilegious and went and told Ramdas, 'Please ask him to bring the pestle and mortar with which he daily prepares betel leaves paste for you.' Ramdas thereupon asked those disciples, 'Yes, go and ask him to bring the mortar.' They accordingly went and told that disciple, 'Master wants us to bring from you the mortar in which you prepare betel leaf for him daily!' The disciple said, 'Wait. I shall give it to you presently.' So saying he took a sword, cut off his head and gave it to the other disciples! When the disciples took the head to the Master, the latter told them, 'Do you now see the *bhakti* of the man whom you misunderstood and maligned? Go and put his head back again on his trunk.' The disciples did as directed and the man came back to life." G. continued and said, "The sword 'Bhavani' was presented to Shivaji by Ramdas. Four men are required to handle that sword, handled by Shivaji. It is now preserved by the British Government."

16-2-46 Morning

G. took permission from Bhagavan to go and visit Skandasramam. Bhagavan said, "Yes" to him and, turning to us said, "What a difference between his state then and now! He was with us at Melasramam (Skandasramam) for more than six months, maybe even a year. He would take *bhiksha* in the town and eat the rice even without salt." Meanwhile another old disciple said to Bhagavan, "There was no room in those days close to the rock behind. Now I find a room with the rock for its western wall. There used to be only a narrow passage

there." Bhagavan said, "Yes. That room is new. During the latter part of my stay there, Vriddhachala Gurukkal of Tiruvannamalai made that room and installed Ambika there and used to do *puja* to the deity. He went in for *siddhis* and to show various feats such as getting sacred ash, sugar, coins. Sometimes he used to sit in *samadhi* for forty days. But latterly he was led astray by these *siddhis*."

At about 10 a.m. Bhagavan was enquiring about the deceased Ramaswami Iyengar and what was being done about the disposal of the body. It was reported that the body was going to be cremated here and that the bones would afterwards be taken and interred at Kumbakonam. Bhagavan then said, "That is all right. It seems that is what the deceased wished should be done." Bhagavan said, "He *i.e*., R. Iyengar must be in one of the group photos. *அப்போ ஜோராய் நின்று கொண்டிருந்தார்* (He was standing gaily then)." So saying, he turned over the book with 111 illustrations and *Self-Realisation* but could not find the picture he had in mind. Thereupon he said, "It must be somewhere, in the earlier editions or among the pictures hung in the dining hall."

Evening

After *parayana*, Bhagavan introduced G. to Sanskrit Pandit Raju Sastri of this place and said, "He has written a work called *Pasupati Hridayam*." The book was shown to Sastri and G. read out a few verses from it. G. also told us that the Pasupati image in Nepal has five faces, four in the four directions and the fifth at the top; and that the image has two arms in each direction. Bhagavan told Sastri, "It seems there is a place called Uttara Gokarnam in Nepal, which is an important shrine. The Maharaja of Nepal is friendly to G. and wants him to stay there as a head-priest or something like that." G. said, "Yes, the Maharaja is very kind to me. He wants me there; as what, I do not know yet. He has some idea in his mind."

A party of forty ladies were ushered into the hall by the second son of Dandapani Swami of Palani. They were Kasiamma, present head of Subrahmanya Sastri's Asramam at Mettivaripalem. Guntur Dt., and some of her disciples. They sang a few songs before Bhagavan and then left.

17-2-46 Morning

Mr. P. D. Shroff arrived from Delhi this morning. He said to Bhagavan, "When I am away from you I feel so miserable. While I am at Delhi, far away, I feel such a pull, as though you are a cruel lover keeping yourself away. Then I must come here at any cost. But when I come here you are like an ordinary person. What is this?" Bhagavan said, "It is always like that. When one is separated, one wants to come."

Afternoon

A visitor asked Bhagavan, "How has *srishti* (creation) come about? Some say it is due to karma. Others say it is the Lord's *lila* or sport. What is the truth?"

Bhagavan: Various accounts are given in books. But is there creation? Only if there is creation, we have to explain how it came about. All that, we may not know. But that we exist now is certain. Why not know the 'I' and the present and then see if there is a creation?

Some young men who had come with an introduction from the Ramakrishna Mission at Madras asked Bhagavan, "Which is the proper path for us to follow?"

Bhagavan: When you speak of a path, where are you now? and where do you want to go? If these are known, then we can talk of the path. Know first where you are and what you are. There is nothing to be reached. You are always as you really are. But you don't realise it. That is all.

A little while after, one of the visitors asked Bhagavan, "I am now following the path of *japa*. Is that all right?"

Bhagavan: Yes. It is quite good. You can continue in that.

The gentleman who asked about creation said, "I never thought I was going to have the good fortune of visiting Bhagavan. But circumstances have brought me here and I find in his presence, without any effort on my part, I am having *santi*. Apparently, getting peace does not depend on our effort. It seems to come only as the result of grace!" Bhagavan was silent. Meanwhile, another visitor remarked, "No. Our effort is also necessary, though no one can do without grace." After some time, Bhagavan remarked, "*Mantra japa*, after a time, leads to a stage when you become *Mantra maya i.e.*, you become that whose name you have been repeating or chanting. First you repeat the *mantra* by mouth; later you do it mentally. First, you do this *dhyana* with breaks. Later, you do it without any break. At that stage you realise you do *dhyana* without any effort on your part, that *dhyana* is your real nature. Till then, effort is necessary."

In the evening Kasiamma's party again came to Bhagavan and after *parayana* sang a few *stotras*. Before leaving, Kasiamma approached Bhagavan and stood before him for a few minutes, during which Bhagavan was looking and yet not looking at her. (I mean, he gave her one of those abstract looks which are not unusual with him). Then the lady asked Bhagavan, "May I have from Bhagavan's lips some words on *svanubhava* or personal experience of Self-realisation?" Bhagavan kept quiet and after a few minutes K. and her party took leave and went away. After she went, Bhagavan remarked, "She was herself singing about *svanubhava* so far. Not that she does not know. She wants to hear about it from me."

18-2-46 Morning

Bhagavan was perusing a Telugu version of *Tiruchuzhi Sthala Puranam* made by Nagamma from Viswanath's Tamil story.

Afternoon

Old attendant and librarian T. S. Rajagopal came on a visit, Bhagavan told me, "He is on his inspection tour (R. recently has become an Inspector for *Madras Mail* with Trichy as Headquarters). He is inspecting us now. We are getting a copy of the *Mail* daily now. The local agent told us that under orders of the Inspector he was sending us a copy."

24-2-46 Morning

About 10-30 a.m. Mrs. Taleyarkhan came near Bhagavan, stood at his feet and asked, "May I say a few words, Bhagavan?" and continued, "I have a great friend, Mrs. W., wife of a prominent official in Los Angeles. In 1942, when I was here, I received a letter from her while I was sitting in this hall. It was a heart-rending letter in which she detailed how her husband fell in love with another woman, got a divorce decree and married the new woman. She was a most beautiful woman, Bhagavan, and they had already a girl about seventeen years old. She was a great society woman and it was impossible that any event of any social importance would take place without her being there. So she felt the grief immensely and wrote it all. I was moved terribly and keenly felt for her and prayed mentally to Bhagavan for her relief. I wrote back to her, sending her a small photo of Bhagavan, and told her, 'Don't be downcast. Your husband will come back to you. I am now with such and such a great personage. I am sending you a small picture of him. Have it on your table. I shall daily pray to him on your behalf. You too pray to him. You will see that you get relief.' But the friend — what do they know about Bhagavan and such things — was disconsolate. She wrote back, 'What you say is impossible. He won't come back.' I wrote again, 'Nothing is impossible with our Bhagavan. So just go on as I have advised you to do.' And now, Bhagavan, I have her letter by air-mail today that her husband has come back to her and she is going to set up a new home again. She writes, 'The impossible

has happened. Your "gentleman" (meaning Bhagavan) has really worked a miracle. Now, I and my husband must come and see him. We want to fly and visit your Master, though the passage costs a lot. Please let me know whether there is a hotel there where we can come and stay'. I have always been praying to Bhagavan for this friend and I am glad Bhagavan has done this for her. I feel so grateful and was moved to tears when reading this letter here now."

I added, "What is there impossible for Bhagavan?" and told Bhagavan, "Only last evening Shroff was complaining to me about his having to go to Delhi. He said, 'It is the hopelessness of the situation that pains me most. There does not seem to be any chance of my coming here again. If I was certain that once in six months or even once a year, I could be visiting here, I would not feel the separation so much. It is the impossibility of it all that worries me'." And I told Shroff the same thing that Mrs. T. told her friend:

"There is nothing impossible at all where Bhagavan is concerned. You may get transferred to Madras. You may grow so rich suddenly as to possess a small aeroplane of your own. What is there that cannot happen by His grace?"

Mrs. Osborne told Bhagavan, "Kitty has written a letter and in it has sent her love to Bhagavan." Bhagavan, turning to me, said, "She has become shy now. When she was going she made her father come and tell me her message 'I hope Bhagavan won't forget me'. And I told her, 'You don't forget Bhagavan and Bhagavan won't forget you'."

25-2-46 Afternoon

Mrs. Taleyarkhan introduced a group, Miss Sen and some others (a Captain or Major Rao, who was going to marry this Miss Sen, and another lady from Indore) as friends of her sister Rita. Then I told Bhagavan that this Rita has had a miracle in her life and made Mrs. T. tell the story. Mrs. T. thereupon told

Bhagavan the following: "Bhagavan, we got this Rita a seat in a medical college and hospital in London for training as a nurse, through the kind offices of Lady Willingdon who was then Vicerine here. The matron of the hospital there, however, disliked my sister from the beginning, because of her colour, and treated her as dirt. My sister patiently bore all this, and always prayed to St. Theresa in whom she had great faith. Her troubles came to a climax in this way. When it was about a month or so for her examination, she accidentally hurt her eye with the spray of an acid, when she was opening a bottle of the acid in the laboratory. The eye had to be kept in bandage for several days and it was not yet all right even close to the examination. But on the night before the examination, after she had gone to sleep, my sister had the following strange experience. She felt she heard a slight footstep and that someone opened the door and was coming gently towards her. She could even hear the rustle and swish of the dress as the visitor approached. The visitor came by the bedside and removed my sister's bandage. My sister opened her eyes and saw her favourite Saint Theresa standing by her with a scroll in her hand. The saint thereon unrolled the scroll and there my sister saw all the questions that were going to be asked in her examination next day. After my sister had ample time to go through the questions one by one and to remember them, the vision passed away, and my sister got up, woke up her friend in the next room, asked her to find from the books all the answers needed and to read them out to her. The next day my sister also attended the examination, found all the questions the same as revealed to her the previous night, answered them and not only passed her examination contrary to the expectations of her matron, but even won the gold medal for proficiency in that year."

When Mrs.T. concluded the above account, I said, "Miracles have not ceased to happen. They are happening even now to those who pray and have faith."

26-2-46 Morning

A visitor told Bhagavan, "Even in my dream I sometimes feel that I am dreaming, *i.e.*, I am conscious that it is a dream and that a fall for instance there cannot hurt me and so on. How is that?"

Bhagavan: How can that be? Even in a dream there must be hurt consequent on a fall. On the other hand, if you are aware it is a dream, you are no longer dreaming. At the best, it may be the transition stage when you are awaking from the dream state.

Another visitor told Bhagavan that some of his dream experiences stood very firmly rooted in his mind, while others were not remembered at all. Bhagavan remarked, "All that we see is a dream, whether we see it in the dream state or in the waking state. On account of some arbitrary standards about the duration of experience and so on, we call one experience dream experience and another waking experience. With reference to Reality, both the experiences are unreal. A man might have such an experience as getting *anugraha* (grace) in his dream and the effect and influence of it on his entire subsequent life may be so profound and so abiding that one cannot call it unreal, while calling real some trifling incident in the waking life, that just flits by, is casual, of no moment whatever and is soon forgotten. Once I had an experience, a vision or dream, whatever you may call it. I and some others including Chadwick had a walk on the hill. Returning, we were walking along a huge street with great buildings on either side. Showing the street and the buildings, I asked Chadwick and the others whether anybody could say that what we were seeing was a dream and they all replied, 'Which fool will say so?' and we walked along and entered the hall and the vision or dream ceased or I woke up. What are we to call this?"

Next the talk drifted to the Self being *pratyaksha* (self-evident) and Bhagavan then related how the song *Atma Vidya*

was composed. He said, "Any *vidya* is for the purpose of knowing something. If it is so self-evident as to render the well-known classical example of *hastamalakam* or a gooseberry on the palm a false analogy, as Muruganar had put it, where was the need for *Atma Vidya*, whether you call it easy or not? What Muruganar meant to say was: 'In the classical example, a hand is necessary, a hand that will and can feel a fruit on it, a fruit, an eye that can see, a person that has already known what fruit it is, and so on and so forth. But for knowing the Self, nothing at all except the Self is needed.' In sleep for instance nothing at all exists for us except ourselves and we admit we existed during that sleep. On waking we say, 'I slept and none of us believes there are two 'I's, the one that slept and the one that is awake now. In the classical example all these must exist to make the fruit self-evident. All these depend on or derive from the Self and make the fruit self-evident. How much more self-evident must the Self itself be? Anyhow there it was, Muruganar had written the *pallavi* and *anupallavi* and wanted the *charanams*. He said he could not possibly complete the song, as somehow no more lines would come to him, and so requested me to complete it. Thereupon I wrote this song. First I wrote only one stanza or *charanam*, but Muruganar wanted at least four, thereupon I made three more. Finally I recollected, I had not made any mention of Annamalai and so made a fifth *charanam* also and made mention of Annamalai in it, as Ponnambalam is mentioned in the stanzas of the song in Nandanar story on which our song is modelled."

A squirrel came to Bhagavan and he was feeding it with cashew-nut pieces as usual. Turning to me, he said, "Shroff sent some cashew-nuts yesterday and said, 'They were intended for my dumb friends'." I said, "Probably Bhagavan would object to our calling these squirrels dumb." Bhagavan said, "They communicate with me. Sometimes I am in a nap. They come and draw attention to their presence by gently biting my finger tips. Besides, they have a lot of language of their own. There is

one great thing about these squirrels. You may place any amount of food before them. They will just eat what they need and leave the rest behind. Not so the rat, for instance. It will take everything it finds and stock it in its hole."

I remarked, "Possibly it would be said that the squirrel is a less intelligent creature than the rat, because it does not plan or provide for the future but lives in the present." Bhagavan said, "Yes. Yes. We consider it intelligence to plan and live wretchedly like this. See how many animals and birds live in this world without planning and stocking. Are they all dying?"

Bhagavan then began speaking of monkeys and said, "They too don't build nests or stock things. They eat what they can find, and go and perch on trees when night falls. They are quite happy. I have known something about their organisation, their kings, laws, regulations. Everything is so perfect and well-organised. So much intelligence behind it all. I even know that *tapas* is not unknown to monkeys. A monkey whom we used to call 'Mottaipaiyan' was once oppressed and ill-treated by a gang. He went away into the forest for a few days, did *tapas*, acquired strength and returned. When he came and sat on a bough and shook it, all the rest of the monkeys, who had previously ill-treated him and of whom he was previously mortally afraid, were now quaking before him. Yes. I am clear that *tapas* is well known to monkeys."

27-2-46 Morning

With the post arrived a composition from the pen of Chinta Dikshitulu, in Telugu, entitled *In the first place, Who are you, Ramana*? After perusing the letters, Bhagavan asked Balaram to read it out in the hall and the same was done. The gist of the paper is: 'You ask everybody who puts a question 'Who are you that put this question?' But who are you? There is sufficient justification for one to regard you as Krishna, or as Skanda, or

as the Goddess who became merged in Arunachala as Ardhanariswara or again as Dakshinamurti. In fact we can go on imagining as so many other gods also. Again, when you sit with your palms turned to the fire by your side, you look like giving *abhaya* (*i.e*., protection from fear). Now, is it only to those in the hall you are giving *abhaya* or to all in the world? It must be the latter. For you have come into the world to give *abhaya* to all."

1-3-46 Morning

Mr. Osborne said, "Bhagavan, last evening Nuna (*i.e*. his daughter about four years old) told us, 'Dr. Syed is my best friend in the world.' Thereupon we asked her, 'What about Bhagavan? and she replied, 'Bhagavan is not in the world'."

Bhagavan was surprised at this remark of the child and involuntarily his finger rose to his nose and, holding it there, he said, "What a sage remark for a child to make! Even great men cannot understand what that remark means. They ought to have asked her, 'Where else is Bhagavan, if not in the world'?" Thereupon Mr. Osborne said, "Yes. We did ask her. She said, 'Bhagavan is out of the world'."

Dr. Syed asked Bhagavan, "Does not total or complete surrender require that one should not have left in him the desire even for liberation or God?"

Bhagavan: Complete surrender does require that you have no desire of your own, that God's desire alone is your desire and that you have no desire of your own.

Dr. Syed: Now that I am satisfied on that point, I want to know what are the steps by which I could achieve surrender.

Bhagavan: There are two ways; one is looking into the source of 'I' and merging into that source. The other is feeling "I am helpless by myself, God alone is all-powerful and except

throwing myself completely on him, there is no other means of safety for me," and thus gradually developing the conviction that God alone exists and the ego does not count. Both methods lead to the same goal. Complete surrender is another name for *jnana* or liberation.

3-3-46 Morning

A visitor quoted verse 33 of Ch. 3 in *Bhagavad Gita* and asked Bhagavan, "Are we then to do nothing and simply allow the senses to go their own way?"

Bhagavan: It only means actions will go on, according to the *gunas* or *prakriti* of the man. They cannot be prevented. But, that is the very reason why man should acquire *jnana* and thus become unaffected by the consequences of such action. The verse says, "Acquire *jnana* and be unattached to the actions and their consequences."

Bhagavan said this after saying, "Let us see in what connection this verse occurs," and looking up the verse in question. Then I remembered that once before I asked Bhagavan about this very same verse, and then Bhagavan pointed out to me the very next verse in which we are directed not to yield to the senses. I mentioned this for the guidance of the visitor. Bhagavan had told me then that, if the two verses were taken together, it could not be contended that *Gita* teaches 'Don't restrain or attempt to restrain the senses, because what does restraint avail?'

Evening

A visitor asked Bhagavan, "When we get a dream, we emerge out of it without any effort on our part. If this life of ours is a dream, as it is said to be, then how is it that we have to make efforts and are called upon to make efforts to end this dream and wake into *jnana*?"

Bhagavan: We do not know about sleep or dream. But we know about the present state, the waking state. Let us try and understand it. Then all will become clear to us. Who is it that undergoes sleep, dream and waking states? You say we must get out of ignorance and wake into *jnana*. Who is it that has the ignorance, and ignorance of what? When you enquire into the source of 'I', all doubts will be set at rest.

5-3-46 Morning

Bhagavan seems to have said yesterday it would be good if one could find out what Nuna meant or felt when she said, 'Bhagavan is not in the world, but out of it.' So Mr. Osborne brought the following writing today and handed it over to Bhagavan.

"I asked Nuna what she meant by 'Bhagavan is not in the world'. At first she was too shy to say anything. I said 'You think Dr. Syed is in the world, don't you?' Nuna said, 'Yes.' 'Where then is Bhagavan, if He is not in the world?' I asked. Nuna replied, 'In the Asramam and in heaven', and added after a pause, 'Bhagavan whom we cannot see is everywhere. If we are very good we can see Him. Everybody is Bhagavan, but not as good as Bhagavan'. How much is pure intuition and how much is what she understood and remembers from occasional talks, it is difficult to say. Sometimes there is no doubt that it is mere intuition. For instance, once at Kodaikanal when saying 'Good night' to her I asked her whether she had been praying and she said, 'Now I want to sleep, sleeping is praying'." After seeing the above Bhagavan and Balaram were both saying, 'Sleeping is praying is a very sane remark.' I could not understand, and so asked Bhagavan about it. He explained that they understood it to mean, sleeping or stilling the mind is real prayer. By 'sleep' should be understood, he told me, 'the sleepless sleep' we often hear mentioned in Tamil books, *e.g.* (தூங்காமல் தூங்கிச் சுகம் பெறுவ தெக்காலம்?) (When will I attain the bliss of sleeping, yet not sleeping).

Evening

When I entered the hall, Bhagavan was talking to Lakshmi, our Venkattoo's child, of whom I am very fond. I told Bhagavan, "There was a proposal some time back that Lakshmi should be left with her mother's sister at Erukoor. They seem to have thought the girl would be better off there, where they require a girl badly for petting and rearing, instead of here where she would be only one of several children. But I did not like the idea at all. When children born somewhere in Poland and other countries come here and grow up in the atmosphere of our Asramam, I could not reconcile myself to the idea of our Lakshmi born here being brought up elsewhere."

Bhagavan said, "The Thatha (the grandfather *viz*., Pichu Aiyar) went to Erukoor; and do you think she would stay there after seeing her Thatha? If Thatha is there, then alone she would stay there." On this Balaram quoted from *Sakuntala* passages in which Sakuntala takes leave of the hermitage and Kanva Maharshi addresses the flowers and says, 'She who used to water you first before taking her food herself, she who would not pluck you however dearly she loved flowers and liked to wear them, she is now leaving you for her husband's house. Bless her.'

Balaram also quoted from some other book a passage which says, 'We, people of the world, have to make great efforts to draw the mind from the objects of sense or from the world and to fix it in the heart, on God. But you, Radha, in whose heart God is fully caught, you have to make effort to get away from God.'

On this Bhagavan remarked, "That is the stage of the *jnani*. He can't escape the Self or go away from it. Where else to go, as all that he knows is the Self which he himself is?"

Mr. Desai asked Bhagavan, "How is it that some saints, who must also have realised the Self, say that it is not desirable for one to merge in the Self, but one must have some slight

individuality left to enjoy the bliss of the Self, just as the fly, to enjoy the honey, should not fall into the honey and be lost in it, but must sit on the edge and go on sipping the honey." Thereupon I told Mr. Desai, "Bhagavan has told us that the analogy is wrong and misleading. The honey is something inert and unconscious, a conscious being is required to taste it and enjoy it. On the other hand, the Self is consciousness and bliss itself and it is absurd to argue that when one becomes that, the Self, one will not be able to enjoy bliss and that one must remain separate to enjoy it." Mr. Desai asked, "Why then have some saints said so? That is our difficulty." I replied, "You must ask those saints. Bhagavan has given us his opinion quite unambiguously that it is not necessary to remain separate to enjoy complete bliss, and that, on the other hand, the bliss cannot be complete till the merger in the Self is complete."

6-3-46 Afternoon

When I entered the hall, Bhagavan was telling Balaram, "Different books and different schools have located the *kundalini* at different centres in the body. While the usual centre with which it is associated is *muladhara*, there are books which locate it in the heart, and other books which locate it in the brain." Thereupon I asked Bhagavan, "You say different people or schools differ on this matter. But as Mr. Desai asked Bhagavan yesterday, the difficulty we feel is this. If people who have mere book or theoretical knowledge say such contradictory things, we may simply brush them aside. But when they come from persons whom we regard as saints who have realised the Self, *i.e*., those who have had direct or immediate knowledge of the Self, the doubt assails us, 'Why such difference of opinion among saints?' Yesterday I tried to silence Desai simply by saying, 'If others have given opinions different from Bhagavan's, you must ask them why they gave such opinions, not Bhagavan. Bhagavan has told us what is the correct opinion.' But now, I

too want to know why different saints differ on such important points". Thereupon Bhagavan was pleased to say, "They may be Self-realised saints and they may know the truth. But they have to suit their teaching to those who ask for it and the differences in the teachings are to be explained by the differences in the *pakva* or fitness of those to whom such teachings are addressed."

Balaram was reading a collection of *Upanishads* and, coming across a passage dealing with *sahaja samadhi* or *sahaja sthiti*, asked me, "Did you not say that Mr. K. S. Ramaswami Sastri once told you that he did not believe in *sahaja* state and that *sahaja* state is not mentioned in the earlier books, but is a later innovation? I find it mentioned here in the *Varaha Upanishads* themselves." I said, "Yes. He thought so. He argued with me, 'How can one be in two planes at the same time? Either he sees the absolute and nothing else or sees the world and then does not see the absolute. And he said that the *sahaja sthiti* is not mentioned in the earlier books, but is found only in later works." Balaram said, "Where are these two planes for the *jnani*? He is only in one plane and so there is no point in Mr. Sastri's argument that one can't be in two planes at the same time." I said, "How can we say the *jnani* is not in two planes? He moves about with us like us in the world and sees the various objects we see. It is not as if he does not see them. For instance he walks along. He sees the path he is treading. Suppose there is a chair or table placed across that path. He sees it, avoids it and goes round. So, have we not to admit he sees the world and the objects there, while of course he sees the Self?" Bhagavan thereupon said, "You say the *jnani* sees the path, treads it, comes across obstacles, avoids them, etc. In whose eyesight is all this, in the *jnani's* or yours?" He continued, "He sees only the Self and all in the Self." Thereupon I asked Bhagavan, "Are there not illustrations given in our books to explain this *sahaja* state clearly to us?"

Bhagavan: Why not? There are. For instance you see a reflection in the mirror and the mirror. You know the mirror

to be the reality and the picture in it a mere reflection. Is it necessary that to see the mirror we should cease to see the reflection in it? Or again take the screen illustration. There is a screen. On that screen first a figure appears. Before that figure on the same screen other pictures appear and the first figure goes on watching the other pictures. If you are the screen and know yourself to be the screen, is it necessary not to see the first figure and the subsequent pictures? When you don't know the screen you think the figure and pictures to be real. But when you know the screen and realise it is the only reality on which as substratum the shadows of the figure and pictures have been cast, you know these to be mere shadows. You may see the shadows, knowing them to be such and knowing yourself to be the screen which is the basis for them all.

9-3-46 Morning

Dr. Masalavala, retired Chief Medical Officer of Bhopal, who has been here for more than a month now and who is now also in temporary charge of the Asramam Hospital in the absence of Dr. Shiva Rao, put the following questions to Bhagavan and got the following answers:

Question: Bhagavan says, 'The influence of the *jnani* steals into the devotee in silence.' Bhagavan also says, 'Contact with great men, exalted souls, is one efficacious means of realising one's true being.'

Bhagavan: Yes. What is the contradiction? *Jnani*, great men, exalted souls — does he (Dr.) differentiate between these?

Thereupon I said, 'No'.

Bhagavan: Contact with them is good. They will work through silence. By speaking, their power is reduced. Silence is most powerful. Speech is always less powerful than silence. So mental contact is the best.

Question: Does this hold good even after the dissolution of the physical body of the *jnani* or is it true only so long as he is in flesh and blood?

Bhagavan: Guru is not the physical form. So the contact will remain even after the physical form of the Guru vanishes.

Question: Similarly, does the contact of a devotee with his Guru continue after the passing of the Guru or does it stop? It is possible that for a ripe soul his Self may act as his Guru after the going away of the Guru, but what is the unripe soul to do? Bhagavan has said that an outer Guru is also needed to push the mind of the devotee towards the Self. Can he come in contact with another adept? Is this contact to be necessarily physical or will a mental contact do? Which is better?

Bhagavan: As already explained, Guru not being physical form, his contact will continue after his form vanishes. If one *jnani* exists in the world, his influence will be felt by or benefit all people in the world and not simply his immediate disciples. All the people in the world are divided into his disciples, *bhaktas*, those who are indifferent to him and those who are even hostile to him and it is said in the following verse that all these classes will be benefited by the existence of the *jnani*.

From *Vedanta Chudamani*:

நெறிமருவு சிடரோடு பத்தருதாசீனர் நிலையில் பாவி களென்று நால்வகை யோரிடத்து முறையினனுக்கிரகம் வந்துறு மருள்கொள் சீவன்முத்தனு லென்பவரவைமுறை யினெடுத் துரைப்பாம். Bhagavan quoted the next verse, *viz*., தெரிவரிய ஜீவன்முக்தன்தனை நம்பும தனுற் சிடர்க்கு முத்தியு மன்பொடு வழிபாடதனைப் புரியு முயர்பத்தர்க்கு நல்வினையு மவன்றன் புனிதமுறு சரிதமது கண்ட யுதாசீனர்க்குரிய புண்ணிய லிருப்பு மவன்றன் வடிவினைக் கண்ணுறுதன் முதலானவற்றுல் பாவிகட்கு பாவ விரிவு முறுமென்பர். The gist is: 'Four classes of people are benefited by *jivanmuktas*. By his faith in the *jivanmukta*, the disciple attains *mukti*, the

bhakta who worships his Guru attains merit, the indifferent who have seen the sacred life of the *jivanmukta* acquire desire for righteousness and even the sinners (*i.e*., the hostile in the first verse) get rid of their sins by the mere fact of their having had *darshan* of such saints.' God, Guru and the Self are the same. After your *bhakti* to God has matured you, God comes in the shape of Guru and from outside pushes your mind inside, while being inside as Self he draws you there from within. Such a Guru is needed generally, though not for very rare and advanced souls. One can go to another Guru after his Guru passes away. But all Gurus are one, as none of them is the form. Always mental contact is the best.

Question: My practice has been a continuous *japa* of the names of God with the incoming breath and the name of Baba (*i.e*., Upasani Baba or Sai Baba) with the outgoing breath. Simultaneously with this I see the form of Baba always. Even in Bhagavan, I see Baba. The external appearances are also much alike. Bhagavan is thin. Baba was a little stout. Now, should I continue this or change the method, as something from within says that if I stick to the name and form I shall never go above name and form? But I can't understand what further to do after giving up name and form. Will Bhagavan please enlighten me on the point?

Bhagavan: You may continue in your present method. When the *japa* becomes continuous, all other thoughts cease and one is in one's real nature, which is *japa* or *dhyana*. We turn our mind outwards on things of the world and are therefore not aware of our real nature being always *japa*. When by conscious effort or *japa* or *dhyana* as we call it, we prevent our mind from thinking of other things, then what remains is our real nature, which is *japa*.

So long as you think you are name and form, you can't escape name and form in *japa* also. When you realise you are

not name and form, then name and form will drop off themselves. No other effort is necessary. *Japa* or *dhyana* will naturally and as a matter of course lead to it. What is now regarded as the means, *japa*, will then be found to be the goal. Name and God are not different. See the teaching of Nama Dev on the significance of God's name, extracted in the September, 1937, issue of the *Vision*. (This was read out in the hall).

Bhagavan also quoted the Bible, 'In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.'

Question: Is liberation to be achieved before the dissolution of the body or can it be had after death? What is the meaning of a verse like II, 72 or VIII, 6 of the *Gita*?

Bhagavan: Is there death for you? For whom is death? The body which dies, were you aware of it, did you have it, during sleep? The *body* was not, when you slept, but *you* existed even then. When you awoke, you got the body and even in the waking state *you* exist. You existed both in sleep and waking. But the body did not exist in sleep and exists only in waking. That which does not exist always, but exists at one time and not at another, cannot be real. You exist always and you alone are therefore real.

Liberation is another name for you. It is always here and now with you. It has not to be won or reached hereafter or somewhere. Christ has said, "The Kingdom of God is within you" here and now. You have no death. Thayumanavar has sung, '*சந்ததமும் வேதமொழி—ஜக மீதிருந்தாலும் மரணமுண் டென்பது சதாநிஷ்டர் நினைவதில்லை*' (*i.e.*, even when living in the world those who are always in *nishta* do not think there is such a thing as death).

The *Gita* verse only means in the context of the whole *Gita* (Ch. II, for instance) that you must achieve liberation during your lifetime. Even if you fail to do it during your lifetime, you must think of God at least at the time of death, since one becomes

what he thinks of at the time of death. But unless all your life you have been thinking of God, unless you have accustomed yourself to *dhyana* of God always during life, it would not at all be possible for you to think of God at the time of death.

14-3-46

I was away at Vellore from 11th afternoon to 13th night. During my absence one Mr. Sankara Dev from Dhulia was here and has left. He has been writing the life of Samartha Ramdas in Marathi, and one part of it has also been published. It seems there was one Ananta Mauni, a disciple of Ramdas, who is believed to have belonged originally to this place and to have gone with Ramdas in his South Indian tour. So the biographer was trying to gather all available information about this Ananta Mauni. Bhagavan was not able to give any information and so advised the visitor to go into the town with guides from the Asramam and try to gather information.

This morning Mr. Manickam, disciple of Sivaprakasam Pillai, arrived, bringing from Mr. S. Pillai two notebooks, containing full notes on *Reality in Forty Verses* in Tamil (Supplement not included), and the general meaning alone for Bhagavan's *Devikalottaram* and *Atmasakshatkaram*.

15-3-46

A visitor from Poona, who has been here for the last two or three days, asked some questions, and Bhagavan told him, "*Mukti* or liberation is our nature. It is another name for us. Our wanting *mukti* is a very funny thing. It is like a man who is in the shade, voluntarily leaving the shade, going into the sun, feeling the severity of the heat there, making great efforts to get back into the shade and then rejoicing, 'How sweet is the shade! I have after all reached the shade!' We all are doing exactly the same. We are not different from the reality. We

imagine we are different, *i.e*., we create the *bheda bhava* (the feeling of difference) and then undergo great *sadhana* to get rid of the *bheda bhava* and realise the oneness. Why imagine or create *bheda bhava* and then destroy it?"

Afternoon

Dr. Masalawala placed in Bhagavan's hands a letter he had received from his friend V.K. Ajgaonkar, a gentleman of about 35 (a follower of Jnaneswar Maharaj) who is said to have attained *jnana* in his 28th year. The letter said, "You call me *purna*. Who is not *purna* in this world?" Bhagavan agreed and continued in the vein in which he discoursed this morning, and said, "We limit ourselves first, then seek to become the unlimited that we always are. All effort is only for giving up the notion that we are limited." The letter further said, "The first verse in the *Isavasyopanishad* says the world is *purna*. It simply cannot be anything else, as its very existence is built on the *purna*." Bhagavan approved of this also, and said, "There is this typed letter, for instance. To see the world alone and not the *purna* or Self would be something like saying. 'I see the letters, but not the paper,' while it is the existence of the paper that makes the existence of the letters possible!" Dr. M. said, "In the letter we see the paper. But we are able to see only the world and we don't see God!" Bhagavan replied: "What happens in sleep? Where did the world go then? Then you alone or the Self alone existed."

The letter also said, "Jnaneswar Maharaj has said God will never forsake his *bhakta* who has undivided love for him." Bhagavan said, "Every saint, every book says so. I have been reading Ram Das's writings. Here, too, so many verses end, 'Ramachandra will never forsake his *bhakta*.'" So saying, Bhagavan read out a few of those verses.

The letter went on to say, "Ramana Maharshi is an exponent of *ajata* doctrine of *Advaita Vedanta*. Of course it is a bit difficult."

Bhagavan remarked on this, "Somebody has told him so. I do not teach only the *ajata* doctrine. I approve of all schools. The same truth has to be expressed in different ways to suit the capacity of the hearer. The *ajata* doctrine says, 'Nothing exists except the one reality. There is no birth or death, no projection or drawing in, no *sadhaka*, no *mumukshu*, no *mukta*, no bondage, no liberation. The one unity alone exists ever.' To such as find it difficult to grasp this truth and who ask, 'How can we ignore this solid world we see all around us?', the dream experience is pointed out and they are told, 'All that you see depends on the seer. Apart from the seer, there is no seen.' This is called the *drishti-srishti vada* or the argument that one first creates out of his mind and then sees what his mind itself has created. To such as cannot grasp even this and who further argue, 'The dream experience is so short, while the world always exists. The dream experience was limited to me. But the world is felt and seen not only by me, but by so many, and we cannot call such a world non-existent', the argument called *srishti-drishti vada* is addressed and they are told, 'God first created such and such a thing, out of such and such an element, and then something else, and so forth.' That alone will satisfy this class. Their mind is otherwise not satisfied and they ask themselves, 'How can all geography, all maps, all sciences, stars, planets and the rules governing or relating to them and all knowledge be totally untrue?' To such it is best to say, 'Yes. God created all this and so you see it.'" Dr.M. said, "But all these cannot be true; only one doctrine can be true." Bhagavan said, "All these are only to suit the capacity of the learner. The absolute can only be one."

The letter further said, "*Avyabhicharini bhakti* is the only necessary thing." As Dr.M. did not understand what *avyabhicharini bhakti* meant, Bhagavan explained that it only meant *bhakti* to God without any other thought occupying the mind. Bhagavan said, "This word, *ananya bhakti, ekagrata bhakti*, all mean the same thing." The letter continued, "In the

mind two things do not exist at the same time. Either God or *samsar*. *Samsar* is already there. That is to be reduced little by little and God is to be entered in its stead." Bhagavan remarked on this. "God is there already, not *samsar*. Only you do not see it on account of the *samsar* rubbish you have filled your mind with. Remove the rubbish and you will see God. If a room is filled with various articles, the space in the room has not vanished anywhere. To have space we have not to create it, but only to remove the articles stocked in the room. Even so, God is there. If you turn the mind inward, instead of outward on things, then you see the mind merges in the one unity which alone exists."

Bhagavan also agreed with the writer when he said that to see God, Guru's grace is necessary, for which again God's *anugraha* is necessary, which in its turn, could be had only by *upasana*.

The letter conveyed the writer's *namaskar* to Bhagavan. Thereupon, Bhagavan said, "The mind merging in its source, the one unity, is the only true *namaskar*."

16-3-46

Ceylon Ramachandra sent me the five songs recently composed by him in Tamil on Bhagavan and his grace towards him, in saving him this time through all his serious illness, and sent word that I should read them before Bhagavan. So at about 10-30 a.m., I read out all the five songs, putting myself in R.'s place and trying to render the songs with their full *bhava*. The previous day, two of these songs alone were ready and had been shown to Bhagavan by Mrs. R. Mr. Viswanath had already written them out in the *stotra* book. Bhagavan made a few corrections and divided the feet (ஶ்ரீ) properly, with the *sandhi* properly joined and not split as R. had written. In the evening, Mr. V. wrote down the remaining three verses also in the book of *stotras* kept in the hall.

17-3-46 Afternoon

Looking at the outgoing mail, Bhagavan remarked "Eknath's mother has passed away. Do you know?" Mr. R. Narayana Aiyar replied, "Yes. I saw in *The Mail* an announcement to that effect." Bhagavan then remarked, "She and her husband the late Dr. Nanjunda Rao came to me even when I was in Virupakshi Cave. After that too, they came once or twice. The last time, they came here with one Chakkarai Ammal, a lady who had learned something and had a following of her own and whom the doctor also regarded as a sort of Guru. They were, I think, returning from a pilgrimage to Benares and other places."

18-3-46

One Mr. Girdhari Lal, an old resident of Aurobindo's Ashram, came here last evening and is staying at the Asramam. He asked Bhagavan this morning. "It is said in the *puranas* that the *kaliyuga* consists of so many thousands of years, and that so much of it has passed and that so much yet remains, etc. May I know when this *yuga* is to end?"

Bhagavan: I don't consider time real. So I take no interest in such matters. We know nothing about the past or the *yugas* which were in the past. Nor do we know about the future. But we know the present exists. Let us know about it first. Then all other doubts will cease. After a pause he added, "Time and space always change. But there is something which is eternal and changeless. For example, the world and time, past or future, nothing exists for us during sleep. But *we* exist. Let us try to find out that which is changeless and which always exists. How will it benefit us to know that the *kaliyuga* started in such and such a year and that it would end so many years after now?"

Girdhari Lal: I know, from the standpoint of one whose level of consciousness is beyond time and space, such

questions are useless. But to us, struggling souls, it may be important in this way. It is said that in the previous *yugas* e.g. *satya yuga*, man had not fallen to the low level in which he now is in this *kaliyuga* and that it was much easier for him then to attain liberation than now.

Bhagavan: On the other hand, it is said it is much easier to secure salvation in this *yuga* than in the *satya yuga*. Some days or hours of penance in this *yuga* would secure what several years of penance alone could have secured in those *yugas*. That is what the books say. Further, there is nothing to attain and no time within which to attain. You are always that. You have not got to attain anything. You have only to give up thinking you are limited, to give up thinking you are this *upadhi* or body.

Girdhari Lal: Then, why do these *puranas* give the exact duration of each *yuga* in so many years?

Bhagavan: There might be an allegorical meaning in the number of years mentioned for each *yuga*. Or, the immensity of the periods of time assigned to each *yuga* may be a mere device to draw man's attention to the fact that, though he should live up to his full span of a hundred years, his life would be such a trifling, insignificant fraction in the entire life of the universe, and that he should therefore take a proper view of his own humble place in the entire scheme and not go about with a swollen head, deeming himself as of great importance. Instead of saying, "What is man's life compared to eternity?" they have taught him to consider how short his span is. Further, it is said there is a regular cycle of such *yugas*. And who knows how many such cycles have come and gone. Again, each *yuga* is sub-divided into four *yugas*. There is no end to all such calculations; and different schools have their theory as to when the present *kaliyuga* is to end. When time itself does not exist, as for instance in sleep, what is the use of bothering oneself with all such questions?

20-3-46 Morning

After I left the dining hall about 11-15 a.m. Bhagavan sent for me there. I was surprised, because it is very unusual for him to send for me. When I went, he told me, "Poor Mr. Virabhadrayya (he was once Deputy Collector at Chittoor and was last at Bellary) is no more. When the letter was shown to me this morning, I looked for you in the hall, to tell you. But you were not there. The son has written. It seems there was a minor operation. We don't know what it was."

Again, in the afternoon, Bhagavan asked me if I was not writing to Mr. V.'s son. I replied: "The son may not even remember me. They may not expect any letter from me." I was just then reading *Dialogues from the Upanishads* by Swami Sivananda Saraswati, and almost the first story there is that of Nachiketas. So I reminded Bhagavan that, soon after Mr. V. came to Bhagavan for the first time from Chittoor, he wrote an article comparing Bhagavan to Nachiketas. He had a notion that Bhagavan was an incarnation of Nachiketas. Bhagavan said, "Yes. I remember the article. He wrote one or two more articles also besides that one."

Evening

Some gentlemen came and recited *Sama Veda* before Bhagavan. It was very pleasant and moving to hear.

21-3-46 Morning

Balaram came across a Sanskrit poem in which the hill called 'Anai Malai' (Elephant Hill) near Madura is mentioned. He mentioned it to Bhagavan and Bhagavan said, "Yes, there is such a hill near Madura. From a distance it looks like a big elephant lying down." The word 'Anaimalai' reminded Bhagavan of the 1st stanza in Tirujnana Sambandar's songs in which 'Anaimalai' is referred to and Bhagavan quoted the song. It begins

'*மானின் நேர் விழி*' and Bhagavan explained, "The Madura King Pandyan was inclined towards Jainism. His wife was the daughter of the Chola King and was attached to *Saivism*. When she heard of the great saint Jnana Sambandar and his doings and of his camping at Vedaranyam, the Pandyan Queen, with the help of a minister who was also attached to *Saivism*, sent an invitation to the Saint to visit Madura and convert the Pandya to *Saivism*. The Saint came accordingly. But when the queen saw he was a mere boy of about ten or even less, she had serious misgivings whether he could be a match for all the big Jain leaders surrounding the King and whether by inviting this child she had put him in jeopardy. When the Saint noticed this, he sang these songs, addressed to the queen and assuring her, 'I am not in any way inferior to these Jains. The Lord is within me. Don't, therefore, be afraid.'

"The songs which follow mention the names of Jain leaders, referring to them in contempt and stating, 'I am not inferior to all these, as the Lord is within me.' It is amusing to read those songs."

Bhagavan added, "This was after the Saint came to Madura. When the invitation reached Vedaranyam, and Jnana Sambandar wanted to start for Madura, Appar (Tirunavukkarasar) who was with Sambandar said, 'Do not start today. The day is not auspicious for you. They, the Jains, are terrible and powerful persons.' Thereupon Jnana Sambandar sang the '*கோளறு பதிகம்*' (*Kolaru Padhikam*), beginning '*வேயுறுதோளி பங்கன்*' in which again he says, 'As the Lord is within me in my heart, no days, no planets, can affect me adversely and every day of the week is equally auspicious'." In the afternoon I brought the *Thevaram* for reference and picked out the above two songs and Bhagavan read them, a few of them aloud. In the Madura poem Bhagavan referred to the last stanza and said, "When I explained the first stanza in the morning I gave the meaning as 'Because the Lord is within me' though the words only mean 'Because there is the Lord.' I

was wondering whether I was justified in my interpretation. I find in the last stanza it is clearly mentioned by the Saint himself that what he meant was 'Because the Lord is within me.' Besides, the same is clear from the whole of the '*கோளறு பதிகம்*'. Look at the last verse in the Madura decad. With what authority he sings, 'No harm can approach those who sing these songs of the King of Shiyali and the master of Tamil.' Similarly in the last song of '*கோளறு பதிகம்*' he says, 'By my order those who read these shall be saved'."

This evening also *Sama Veda* was recited.

22-3-46 Afternoon

Last night, Mr. Bose, his mother, Lady C. V. Raman and Swami Sambuddhananda of the Ramakrishna Mission, Bombay, arrived here. The Swami quoted a verse from *Bhagavad Gita* which says that one in a thousand succeeds and knows really the *tattva* or entity. For some time Bhagavan kept quiet. When the Swami wanted an answer, some of us could not help remarking, "What is your question? What answer do you expect?" Dr. Masalawala even pointedly asked, "What is the motive behind this question?" Thereupon, the Swami said, "I think our Bhagavan has attained Self-realisation. Such beings are walking *Upanishads*. So I want to hear, from his own lips, his experience of Self-realisation. Why are you all butting in and distracting us from the point and purpose of my question?"

After all this, Bhagavan said, "You say you think I have attained Self-realisation. I must know what you mean by Self-realisation. What idea do you have in your mind about it?" The Swami was not pleased with this counter-question, but added, after some time, "I mean the *atman* merging in the *paramatman.*" Bhagavan then said, "We do not know about the *paramatman* or the Universal Soul, etc. We know we exist. Nobody doubts he exists, though he may doubt the existence

of God. So, if one finds out about the truth or source of oneself, that is all that is required." The Swami thereupon said, "Bhagavan therefore says 'Know Thyself'." Bhagavan said. "Even that is not correct. For, if we talk of knowing the Self, there must be two Selves, one a knowing Self, another the Self which is known, and the process of knowing. The state we call realisation is simply being oneself, not knowing anything or becoming anything. If one has realised, he is that which alone is and which alone has always been. He cannot describe that state. He can only be that. Of course, we loosely talk of Self-realisation, for want of a better term. How to 'real-ise' or make real that which alone is real? What we are all doing is, we 'realised' or regard as real that which is unreal. This habit of ours has to be given up. All *sadhana* under all systems of thought is meant only for this end. When we give up regarding the unreal as real, then the reality alone will remain and we will be that."

The Swami replied, "This exposition is all right with reference to *Advaita*. But there are other schools which do not insist on the disappearance of *triputi* (the three factors of knowledge) as the condition for Self-realisation. There are schools which believe in the existence of two and even three eternal entities. There is the *bhakta*, for instance. That he may do *bhakti*, there must be a God." Bhagavan replied, "Whoever objects to one having a God to worship, so long as he requires such a separate God? Through *bhakti* he develops himself, and comes to feel that God alone exists and that he, the *bhakta*, does not count. He comes to a stage when he says, 'Not I, but Thou'; 'Not my will, but Thy will.' When that stage is reached, which is called complete surrender in the *bhakti marga*, one finds effacement of ego is attainment of Self. We need not quarrel whether there are two entities, or more, or only one. Even according to *Dvaitis* and according to the *bhakti marga*, complete surrender is prescribed. Do that first, and then see for yourself whether the one Self alone exists, or whether there are two or more entities."

Bhagavan further added, "Whatever may be said to suit the different capacities of different men, the truth is, the state of Self-realisation must be beyond *triputis*. The Self is not something of which *jnana* or *ajnana* can be predicated. It is beyond *ajnana* and *jnana*. The Self is the Self; that is all that can be said of it."

The Swami then asked whether a *jnani* could remain with his body after attaining Self-realisation. He said, "It is said that the impact of Self-realisation is so forceful that the weak physical body cannot bear it for more than twenty-one days at the longest." Bhagavan said, "What is your idea of a *jnani*? Is he the body or something different? If he is something apart from the body, how could he be affected by the body? The books talk of different kinds of *mukti, videha mukti* (without body), and *jivan mukti* (with body). There may be different stages in the *sadhana*. But in realisation there are no degrees."

The Swami then asked, "What is the best means for Self-realisation?"

Bhagavan: 'I exist' is the only permanent, self-evident experience of everyone. Nothing else is so self-evident (*pratyaksha*) as 'I am'. What people call 'self-evident' *viz*., the experience they get through the senses, is far from self-evident. The Self alone is that. *Pratyaksha* is another name for the Self. So, to do Self-analysis and be 'I am' is the only thing to do. '*I am*' is reality. I am *this* or *that* is unreal. 'I am' is truth, another name for Self. 'I am God' is not true.

The Swami thereupon said, "The Upanishads themselves have said 'I am Brahman'." Bhagavan replied, "That is not how the text is to be understood. It simply means, "Brahman exists as 'I' and not 'I am Brahman'. It is not to be supposed that a man is advised to contemplate 'I am Brahman', 'I am Brahman'. Does a man keep on thinking 'I am a man' 'I am a man'? He is that, and except when a doubt arises as to whether he is an

animal or a tree, there is no need for him to assert, 'I am a man.' Similarly the Self is Self, Brahman exists as 'I am', in every thing and every being."

The Swami remarked, "The *bhakta* requires a God to whom he can do *bhakti*. Is he to be taught that there is only the Self, not a worshipper and the worshipped?"

Bhagavan: Of course, God is required for *sadhana*. But the end of the *sadhana*, even in *bhakti marga*, is attained only after complete surrender. What does it mean, except that effacement of ego results in Self remaining as it always has been? Whatever path one may choose, the 'I' is inescapable, the 'I' that does the *nishkama karma*, the 'I' that pines for joining the Lord from whom it feels it has been separated, the 'I' that feels it has slipped from its real nature, and so on. The source of this 'I' must be found out. Then all questions will be solved. Whereas all paths are approved in the *Bhagavad Gita*, it says that the *jnani* is the best *karma yogi*, the best devotee or *bhakta*, the highest *yogi* and so on."

The Swami still persisted, "It is all right to say Self-analysis is the best thing to do. But in practice, we find a God is necessary for most people."

Bhagavan: God is of course necessary, for most people. They can go on with one, till they find out that they and God are not different.

The Swami continued, "In actual practice, *sadhakas*, even sincere ones, sometimes become dejected and lose faith in God. How to restore their faith? What should we do for them?"

Bhagavan: If one cannot believe in God, it does not matter. I suppose he believes in himself, in his own existence. Let him find out the source from which he came.

Swami: Such a man will only say the source from which he comes are his parents.

Bhagavan: He cannot be such an ignoramus, as you started by saying he was a *sadhaka* in this line already.

23-3-46 Afternoon

Bhagavan was perusing *Thirukovalur Puranam* and telling the story of Pari, the philanthropist, and about Avvai having got his daughters married to a king. Bhagavan was saying that in this book Pari is traced to Ceylon, whereas in other books a Pari is mentioned as having lived in these parts and having eclipsed by his liberality the three kings, Chera, Chola and Pandya.

24-3-46

I referred to Swami Sambuddhananda's last question, what to do with those who have lost faith in God and who, if asked to find out their source, may say, 'Our parents are the source from which we spring.'

Bhagavan: Fancy a man saying our source is our parents.

I asked, "But what about a pure materialist, who does not believe in God. How are we to deal with him?"

Bhagavan: He will come gradually, step by step, to find out the source of 'I'. First, adversity will make him feel that there is a power beyond his control, upsetting his plans. Then, he will begin with rituals, ceremonial worship, and through *japa, kirtan, dhyana*, go on to *vichara*.

I asked Bhagavan, "What is the fire that is called the Nachiketa fire in the *Kathopanishad?*"

Bhagavan: "I don't know what exactly it is. It must refer to some fire ritual. These terms are generally symbolical. Only today, I saw in the current number of the *Ramakrishna Vijayam* an article on the Five Fires." So saying, he took up the journal and read out to us almost the whole of the article. It refers to the *svarga loka*,

the *megha mandala*, the earth, man and woman as the five fires, and gives allegorical interpretations for all the details.

25-3-46 Afternoon

I again asked Bhagavan about the Nachiketa fire. "I find from the *Kathopanishad* that there was already a fire sacrifice which was supposed to lead one to heaven. After Yama explained it to Nachiketas as the second boon, he voluntarily said, 'Hereafter this fire will be called the Nachiketa fire, after you.' But later, the Nachiketa fire is mentioned as three fires. I don't understand what this fire is and why it is called three fires." Thereupon, Bhagavan asked us to look up the commentary and we took out Krishna Prem's *Kathopanishad* and Bhagavan read out the portion concerned. He added, "Everything is allegorical. They gave out truths only in this way, never straight out in a simple and direct manner. The same fire has three branches or flames, and so is called one fire or three fires. But both the one fire and the three branches are allegorical, the fire standing for something and the branches for other things. The commentary says that the one central fire has to be kindled on the three planes, *bhu, bhuvar,* and *suvar*, or the physical, astral and mental planes."

Colombo Ramachandra had sent two more '*திருத்தாண்டகம்*' (*Tiruttandagam*) stanzas composed by him. Bhagavan saw them this morning, passed them, and asked Muruganar to go through them, as well as the other six stanzas already composed by Ramachandra, and recorded in the *stotra* book. Muruganar perused all the eight and had no alterations or corrections to suggest. So, again with Bhagavan's permission, the two stanzas were recorded by Mr. Viswanath in the *stotra* book.

26-3-46

About 10-30 a.m. a gentleman from Jhansi, who it seems teaches music to a princess, arrived here recently in a state of great excitement and emotion, having made up his mind after

reading about Bhagavan that he must somehow run up to him. He told Bhagavan last evening, "Bhagavan, I have come a long distance, travelling two days and two nights. I was not sure I would succeed in seeing Bhagavan. I did not even take leave from my employers. I was so mad about coming here that nothing else entered my mind. Now that I have arrived and seen Bhagavan, my mind is filled with bliss which I cannot express." And he sang a few songs. But emotion overpowered him and he could not proceed. Bhagavan was kindly looking at him for several minutes and showered his grace on the fortunate devotee.

26-3-46 Afternoon

A lady devotee Sitamma, a resident of Madura, read out and then gave to Bhagavan, a *kummi* poem composed by her in commemoration of the opening of Ramana Mandiram at Madura on the 10th of the Tamil month *Masi* in the year *Parthiva* when Bhagavan's portrait was carried in procession through that town. Chinna Swami told us that this lady came across the above procession without having had any previous notice about it, and was so overpowered with joy that she went into ecstasy and remained in a sort of trance for about 15 minutes.

27-3-46 Afternoon

Mr. Nanavati of Bombay asked Bhagavan the meaning of the word *madhvada* in the *Kathopanishad*. After consulting some books, it was found out that the expression means the ego or *jiva* which is the enjoyer of *madhu* or all the enjoyments of the world. In this connection Bhagavan said, "There are so many *vidyas* mentioned in the Upanishads. One of them is *madhu vidya*. Elaborate details and rules are given for each of these *vidyas*. But what is the use of all these *vidyas*? Still we must note that there are some whose minds are so built that they can take interest only in such *vidyas*. But the truth is, all karma of whatever kind will lead to fresh bondage. That is why it is said in '*ஒழிவில்*

ஒடுக்கம்' (*Ozhivil odukkam*) that Guru who prescribes fresh karma or action of any sort *i.e.*, rituals or sacrifices to one who after trying various karmas comes to him for peace, is both Brahma and Yama to the disciple *i.e.*, he only creates fresh births and deaths. The following stanza which says this was quoted:

கிரியைக் கிளைத்துவந்து கேட்டவர்க்குச் சும்மா
திரியச் சுகம்விளைத்த சீமான்—குருவன்றிச்
சற்றே பதைப்புத் தரினுஞ் சகம்படைக்கக்
கற்றுனுங் காலனுமாங் காண்.

28-3-46 Morning

Bhagavan's legs were being massaged by Dr. S. Rao, with a *taila*, prepared by Siva Das, which was being exhausted with today's use. So the Asramam was thinking of preparing a *taila* and to help them Bhagavan took up a book in Telugu containing recipes and, the moment he opened it, it opened at a page dealing with camphor liniment. The coincidence was remarkable. The recipe contained almost all the ingredients the Asramam intended to use and in addition *tulsi* leaf and something else. Bhagavan was very particular that the bottle in which Siva Das had sent his *taila* should be returned to him and gave instructions to that effect to attendant Krishnaswami. Again when Siva Das came to the hall later in the day, Bhagavan asked him and Krishnaswami whether the bottle had been returned and was satisfied only when he learned it had been done.

Afternoon

Bhagavan was looking into *Arunachala Sthalapuranam*, and reading the *Arunachala satakam*, where the story of Pari's daughters being got married by Avvai is briefly told, to compare it with the account given in *Thirukovalur Sthalapuranam*. The accounts tallied more or less. But Bhagavan told us that the Pari known as a great giver or philanthropist is supposed to have lived near Madura, Piranmalai etc., and to have been put

to death by the machinations of the three kings, Chera, Chola and Pandya, who were envious of his reputation, whereas these two books mention Pari as having ruled in Ceylon.

29-3-46 Afternoon

A visitor wrote some questions in Tamil and presented them to Bhagavan. Bhagavan said, "He wants to know how to turn the mind from sense enjoyments and realise that bliss which is said to be so much above sense-enjoyments. There is only one way, making the mind merge in That which is not sense-enjoyment. As you concentrate on That, the sense attractions will fall of their own accord. Again, he asks, 'When can I attain that bliss?' He is daily enjoying that bliss in sleep. There, no sense object is present, and he still enjoys great bliss. We have not got to attain bliss. We are bliss. Bliss is another name for us. It is our nature. All that we have to do is to turn the mind, draw it from the sense objects every time it goes towards them, and fix it in the Self. He asks whether he will attain bliss after death. There is no need to die to attain bliss. Merging of the mind alone is necessary. Death is also another name for us. For what is death but giving up the body? Our real nature is to be without the body."

After a pause Bhagavan added, "The story of Indra and Ahalya in *Yoga Vasishta* strongly illustrates how, by the force of the mind being merged in one thing, all other things will cease to affect one. There Ahalya, the wife of a king, falls in love with a rake called Indra and they passionately love each other. The matter reached the king's ears and attains the magnitude of a great public scandal. The king then orders the couple to be put through various cruel tortures. But neither of them is affected by the tortures. Their faces do not even show a twitch of pain but are blissfully smiling at each other. The king, baffled by all this, asks them what the secret of their strength and resistance is. They said, 'What! don't you know? We are

looking at each other, and so engrossed are we with each other, that our mind has no room in it for any other thoughts. So far as we are concerned, we two alone exist, each for the other, and nothing else exists. How then can we be affected by other things?' Such is the power of the merged mind."

Night

Muruganar brought a book by Raghava Iyengar, the famous Tamil scholar, and quoted authority to prove that, whatever *puranas* like *Thirukovalur Purana* may say, it has been established beyond doubt that Pari, the philanthropist known to Tamil literature, was one who lived and flourished near Piranmalai and not anyone who lived in Ceylon.

In the afternoon, Mr. Bose showed Bhagavan a letter he had received from Paul Brunton. In this, Brunton says he is going back to America and that he should have very much liked to meet Bhagavan during the last six years, but it was rendered impossible by the attitude of the Asramam and that therefore he had come to accept fate in this matter and was meeting Bhagavan only in the deep places of his heart where Bhagavan still is.

7-4-46 Night

A visitor said, "In the Pondicherry Aurobindo Ashram it is said that the final stage of spiritual progress is to become the *purushottama* and it would seem that activity is predicated of that *purushottama i.e.*, some *vritti* would seem to be associated with that state, whereas it is believed by other schools that cessation of all *vrittis* is liberation."

Bhagavan said, "You say, all schools advise you to give up all *vrittis* so that you can reach your final goal, whether it is becoming *purushottama* or something else. You must cease to be the three kinds of ordinary *purusha i.e.*, the *adhama, madhyama, uttama* and become that *purushottama*. This is

accepted. Whether, when you transcend these three kinds and cease to be the ordinary *purusha*, there is any *vritti* still left is a matter with which you need not concern yourself now. Attain that state and see for yourself what that state is and whether there is any *vritti* in it. To speak even of *brahmakara vritti*, as we sometimes do, is not accurate. If we can talk of the river that has merged in the ocean as still a river and call it *samudrakara river*, we can talk of the final stage in spiritual growth as having *Brahmakara vritti*. When people from Sri Aurobindo's Ashram come here and ask about the differences between our school and theirs, I always tell them, 'There, complete surrender is advised and insisted upon before anything further could be hoped for or attained. So, do it first. I also advise it. After making such surrender, *i.e*., complete surrender and not any partial or conditional surrender, you will be able to see for yourself whether there are two *purushas*, whether power comes from anywhere and gets into anywhere, etc.' For we know nothing about God or any source from which power comes and gets into us. All that is not known. But 'I exist' is known beyond all dispute by all men. So let us know who that 'I' is. If, after knowing it, there still remain any doubts such as are now raised, it will be time enough then to try and clear such doubts."

From this point, the talk drifted to the various schools of thought, one saying there is only reality, others saying there are three eternal entities such as *jagat, jiva* and *Ishwara*, or *pati, pasu* and *pasam*. In this connection, Bhagavan observed humorously, "It is not at all correct to say that *Advaitins* or the Shankara school deny the existence of the world or that they call it unreal. On the other hand, it is more real to them than to others. Their world will always exist, whereas the world of the other schools will have origin, growth and decay and as such cannot be real. Only, they say the world as world is not real, but that the world as Brahman is real. All is Brahman, nothing exists but Brahman, and the world as Brahman is real. In this way,

they claim they give more reality to the world than the other schools do. For example, according to schools which believe in three entities, the *jagat* is only one-third of the reality whereas according to *Advaita,* the world as Brahman is reality, the world and reality are not different. Similarly, even to God or Brahman, the other schools give only one-third sovereignty. The other two entities necessarily limit the reality of God. So, when Shankara is called *mayavadi* it may be retorted, 'Shankara says *maya* does not exist. He who denies the existence of *maya* and calls it *mithya* or non-existent cannot be called a *mayavadi.* It is those who grant its existence and call its product, the world, a reality who should rightly be called *mayavadis.* One who denies Ishwara is not called *Ishwaravadi,* but only one who affirms the existence of *Ishwara.'"* Bhagavan went on to add, "All these are of course vain disputations. There can be no end to such disputations. The proper thing to do is to find out the 'I', about whose existence nobody has any doubt, and which alone persists when everything else vanishes, as during sleep, and then see if there is any room for such doubts or disputes."

8-4-46

Most of Bhagavan's time today was spent in listening to *Arunachala Mahatmyam,* compiled by Mr. Venkatrama Aiyar in English, with material culled from *Skanda Puranam* and other books.

9-4-46

Reading of the above work was continued and finished this morning.

In today's post were received two books in the Czech language, one being *The Life and Teachings of Ramana Maharshi* and the other a translation of Bhagavan's important works. First, we could not understand in what language the

books were written. But Mr. Osborne told us it was Czech. Bhagavan looked into the books and the pictures it contained of him and of the hill with the clouds above it.

Afternoon

Bhagavan found that the pages of one of the above books were uncut. So he took a penknife and cut some pages. Meanwhile, he discovered that the book had not even been stitched and bound properly. So he decided to send it to the local binder, who would also attend to the cutting, etc.

Mrs. Shroff brought a small ornamental box, apparently of silver, and a small plate of copper with some sweets in them, and offered them to Bhagavan as having been sent to him by her husband. Bhagavan asked the attendants to take the sweets and return the box and plate with one or two sweets to Mrs. S. But when they were returned, Mrs. S. said they were all offered to Bhagavan, not only the sweets. Thereupon, Bhagavan said, "What are we to do with them? Send them to the office and tell them Shroff has sent them." This put Bhagavan in a reminiscent mood and he said, "For many years, while I was on the Hill, we had nothing but one or two mud-pots — no vessel at all of any sort. After many years, one day, a woman brought me some eatables in a small vessel, very old and battered and patched up in many places, and when we took the eatables and returned the rotten old vessel, she insisted on our keeping the vessel too, saying, 'It might be of some use to people who come here for drinking water, etc. So please keep it here.' That was the beginning of our having any vessels at all. After that, gradually one vessel after another found its way into the Asramam, till now we have all sorts of things brought here, like this box and plate. What am I to do with such things?" Thereupon, I remarked, "Yes. What should Bhagavan do with these things? But when people come across any such fancy things and like them themselves, they like to offer them to one whom they love best. That is only natural."

10-4-46 Morning

Dr. Masalavala gave Bhagavan a letter addressed to him by a friend of his. Bhagavan perused it. Some portions of it were not cogent. With other portions there could be no quarrel. The letter said that all is contained in *asti* (*sat*), *bhati* (*chit*), *priya* (*ananda*), *nam* and *rup*, that the first three constitute reality, and the rest the fleeting and unreal; that *jnana* consists in seeing only the reality and not the *nam-rup*, that the first three constitute *aham* and the next two constitute *idam* (this). Bhagavan agreed and said, "'I' and 'this' between them exhaust everything." The letter also said that seeing Brahman alone in everything and everywhere is *jnanottara bhakti*. With reference to this, Bhagavan said, "This is a matter of mere words, whether you call the stage of seeing only Brahman, *jnanottara bhakti* or *bhakti-uttara jnana*. In reality, saying 'We must see Brahman in everything and everywhere' is also not quite correct. Only that stage is final, where there is no seeing, where there is no time or space. There will be no seer, seeing and an object to see. What exists then is only the infinite eye."

In the afternoon Mr. Narayanaswamy Aiyar's daughter, married to our Sundaresa Aiyar's son, sang a few songs and then related the following miracle:

"In Cawnpore, we are living on the third floor of a house and we are the only residents on that floor. We have a tap there, but water rarely rises up to that level and we have daily to go down several flights of stairs and climb up with all the water necessary for us. My husband used to do this work daily for me. It was too much for him. And I was too weak to be able to help him in this daily task. One day, when I was alone in the house and my husband was in his office, I was pondering over this hard situation of ours and how we were to find a solution for this. I had kept the empty vessel before the tap and was singing in a pensive mood. Then I began singing the song *Saranagati*. (This

is a song well-known among Bhagavan's devotees. It was composed by Mr. M.V. Ramaswami Aiyar and is sung by him and the members of his family whenever they want Bhagavan to interpose and avert evil from them or bring them good). It says, in brief, 'We take shelter under you and you are our sole refuge. Who else is there to whom we can turn? If you delay to come to our rescue, we can bear it no longer. So, come at once, end my misery, give me happiness!' Then the water began to trickle down the tap and kept on flowing more as I went on with the song. So I sang the song till all our vessels were filled with water. When my husband returned home, he was surprised to find so much water and could not conceive how I could have got all that water. Then I told him, 'I have discovered now a secret device for getting water. If I sing *Saranagati* I can get water.' My husband naturally could not believe it and so I tried the same device again in his presence and the water flowed from the tap. Ever since then, my water problem has ceased. I had only to sing *Saranagati*, and water will flow from the tap. I have tried other songs. But they don't give the same result. Afterwards, when I fell ill and father came to see me, I told him about this and he too could not believe it, till I again repeated the experiment before him and he saw it succeeded. He asked me to try other songs. I did. But none of them produced the same result." The girl told all this with great glee and there was such a ring of truth about the whole narration that I consider it would be absurd to doubt the truth of the experience.

In the night, Bhagavan asked attendant Vaikuntha Vasan whether the monkeys were properly fed in the noon and whether many monkeys turned up. It being 'Sri Rama Navami', Bhagavan had suggested, "This is their (monkeys') day. We must give them food". And accordingly about 11 a.m., when we were all having our food, Vaikuntha Vasan seems to have taken a good quantity of food, vegetables, *vadai, payasam, i.e.*, all that we were taking, all mixed up together, to the steps at the back of the Asramam for

the monkeys. Bhagavan's question had reference to this. Vaikunta Vasan replied, "When I went, there were only two or three monkeys. But after a time, all of them came and they were all well-fed. They did not quarrel with each other or bite each other." Bhagavan said, "They won't fight when there is enough for all. All trouble arises only when there is want. They would also raise a big cry as an indication of their joy, whenever they get plenty to eat. We have had such experiences when I was on the Hill. They used to be fed frequently there."

11-4-46 Morning

About 8 a.m., as Bhagavan was entering his 'cage' as he calls it, *i.e.*, the new railing round his sofa, he was staring hard at Dr. Srinivasa Rao who was standing near me to the south of Bhagavan's sofa. I was wondering why Bhagavan did so. But after a few minutes, Bhagavan explained, "It looked to me as if you were wearing shorts and I was wondering whether you were about to go out somewhere. Whenever Mudaliar gets into his pants, I know he is about to go out somewhere. So I thought you too were preparing to get out. But I see now you had only tucked up your *dhoti* in such a way that it looked as if you were in shorts." The Doctor said, "No, I have given up trousers now."

About 11 a.m. after the bell had been rung for lunch as usual, Bhagavan was trying to get up from his sofa. As usual, he was rubbing his legs, knees and massaging them gently before getting up; and turning to Mr. S. Doraiswamy Iyer (who arrived here last evening), told him, "Your friend *(i.e.*, Dr. S. Rao) is giving such great attention to this pain of mine that it refuses to leave me. Who will like to depart from a place where they received all hospitality and attention?" Mr. S.D. replied, "Apparently, Bhagavan is keeping this pain, only to benefit the doctor."

In the afternoon, as I entered the hall, Bhagavan was looking into the two Czech books recently received, and after

looking at them and approving the binding done locally he returned them to me. I showed them to Mr. S. D. Then Bhagavan asked him if he had seen Zimmer's book in German on Bhagavan. Mr. S. D. replied he had not. So I went and got the book and showed it to Mr. S. D.

12-4-46 Morning

I told Bhagavan: "Last evening when I went into the town, a lady, who met me on the road, accosted me and asked me if I was doing well. I could not recognise her. She felt offended and told me she also claimed to be connected with Bhagavan. It seems her mother, one Unnamalai Ammal was giving milk regularly to Jadaswami when Bhagavan used to frequent Jadaswami's place, that then this Unnamalai Ammal would give milk to Bhagavan also, that her father used to fan Bhagavan, that she herself as a child of two or three had even clung to Bhagavan's back, that her name Rukmani was given to her by Bhagavan and that even now whenever she goes to the Asramam, Bhagavan enquires about her, and so on. I wonder if all this is true." Bhagavan said, "Yes. Yes. I knew the mother who was attending on Jadaswami. I have known this lady from her childhood. She comes here now too. They are a Komutti family. The father died long ago."

Afternoon

A visitor had given Bhagavan a piece of paper on which he had scribbled in pencil a number of questions. When I went into the hall about 3 p.m., Bhagavan was trying to decipher them and turning round to me said, "Here is a question paper."

Question 1: How to get rid of credulousness? The visitor's problem was that he starts with some ideal recommended to him, but when others come and recommend other ideals, he feels inclined to believe them and give up his old ideals.

Bhagavan: Yes. Yes. Our whole trouble is that we are credulous. We believe in everything except the reality. We must give up all our false beliefs, and that is the only thing we have to do. Then the reality will shine by itself.

Question 2: I start with great keenness towards some ideal. But gradually I get slack. What should I do to prevent it, and what is the reason for this happening?

Bhagavan: Just as there must have been a reason for your keenness at one time, there must be a reason for getting slack also later on.

Question 3: There are a number of spiritual teachers, teaching various paths. Whom should one take for one's Guru?

Bhagavan: Choose that one where you find you get *shanti* or peace.

Question 4: What is the best way of dealing with desires, with a view to getting rid of them — satisfying them or suppressing them?

Bhagavan: If a desire can be got rid of by satisfying it, there will be no harm in satisfying such a desire. But desires generally are not eradicated by satisfaction. Trying to root them out that way is like pouring spirits to quench fire. At the same time, the proper remedy is not forcible suppression, since such repression is bound to react sooner or later into forceful surging up with undesirable consequences. The proper way to get rid of a desire is to find out "Who gets the desire? What is its source?" When this is found, the desire is rooted out and it will never again emerge or grow. Small desires such as the desire to eat, drink and sleep and attend to calls of nature, though these may also be classed among desires, you can safely satisfy. They will not implant *vasanas* in your mind, necessitating further birth. Those activities are just necessary to carry on life and are not likely to develop or leave behind *vasanas* or tendencies. As

a general rule, therefore, there is no harm in satisfying a desire where the satisfaction will not lead to further desires by creating *vasanas* in the mind.

Question 5: What is the meaning of '*Om*'?

Bhagavan: 'Om' is everything. It is another name for Brahmam.

I was looking into the January issue of *Vision* and came across a story about Kulasekhara Alwar. Having heard during a *kalakshepam* that Ravana had taken away Sita, Kulasekhara identified himself so much with the situation in the story that he thought it was his duty as a worshipper of Rama at once to hasten to Lanka and release Sita, that he ran up and had entered the sea to cross over to Lanka, that then Rama appeared with Sita and Lakshmana showered His grace on him. I remembered another version, that Kulasekhara started on a campaign with his army to succour Rama, that meanwhile the Bhagavatar doing the *kalakshepam*, sensing the situation, passed on at once to Rama emerging victoriously from the battle, killing all his enemies, etc. Bhagavan also thought the version I had in mind was the correct one and that the matter referred to Rama's battle with Khara and Dushana and not with Ravana for Sita. Bhagavan looked up a history of the Alwars and told us that both incidents are found in Kulasekhara's life. This led me to make the following remark, "Some Maratha Saint also did a similar thing. He leaped up to the roof, I think." Thereupon, Dr. S. Rao asked Bhagavan, "I don't know that story. What is that story?" Thereupon Bhagavan said, "Ekanath was writing the Ramayana and when he came to the portion in which he was graphically describing that Hanuman jumped across the ocean to Lanka, he so identified himself with his hero Hanuman, that unconsciously he leaped into the air and landed on the roof of his neighbour. This neighbour had always a poor opinion of Ekanath, taking him for a humbug and religious hypocrite. He heard a thud on his roof and, coming out to see what it was,

discovered Ekanath lying down on the roof with the cadjan leaf in one hand and his iron stile in the other, and the cadjan leaf had verses describing how Hanuman leapt across the sea. This incident proved to the neighbour what a genuine *bhakta* Ekanath was and he became his disciple."

After a pause, Bhagavan also related, "God appeared in a dream to Ekanath and asked him to go and repair the tomb of Jnaneswar. When Ekanath went there accordingly, he found a contractor ready to do all the work and take payment at the end. The contractor opened a big account, in which all expenses were entered, with the names of all the workmen and wages paid to them. Everything went on systematically and when the work of repairs having been completed, the accounts had to be looked into and the contractor paid his dues, the contractor and his big account book totally disappeared. Then alone Ekanath came to know God was his contractor and did the work. Such things have happened."

13-4-46

Today is Tamil New Year Day. The *panchangam* for the New Year was read out by our Sastriar in Bhagavan's presence in the afternoon.

14-4-46 Afternoon

Attendant Sivananda was reading out the Tamil *Siva Sahasranama* found at the end of *Tiru Arul Mozhi*. When I entered the hall about 3 p.m. Bhagavan was trying to correct S. as the latter went on reading. So I ran up to my room and brought my copy of the same book and gave it to Bhagavan, so that it would be easier for him to follow S. and correct him. Bhagavan said, "No. It is impossible to correct him. He makes so many mistakes." Thereupon I offered to help S. and the reading went on for some time. In the course of this reading I found out how much it goes

against Bhagavan's grain if poems are not read out according to '*சீர்*' (prosodic feet) and in the proper way in which each kind of verse is to be read, or if mistakes are made. After some time S. himself thought he would stop reading and did so.

Nagamma returned the Telugu journal *Bharati* and Bhagavan asked me if I had read Chinta Dikshitulu's *Asal Neevu Evaru* (*In reality who are you*?) which appeared in that journal. I said, "Yes". Bhagavan suggested that an English translation of it might be useful. I was under the impression that Mauni had already translated it into English. For, I remembered that Balaram in the hall translated 'Asal' as 'In reality' and that later Mauni translated it as 'In the first instance' and I preferred the latter. So I ran up to Mauni and asked if he had not made an English translation. He said he had only translated the title of the article. So, I told Bhagavan I would myself translate it. Meanwhile, we requested Viswanath to translate it into Tamil with the help of Subba Rao.

15-4-46 Morning

About 8 a.m. Nagamma came into the hall and prostrated herself before Bhagavan, after having gone round the hall a few times. Bhagavan said, "Ah! you too have started going round. Have you learnt it from Ravanamma? She used to go round and round, till I spoke to her about it the other day. If one goes round like that, everybody who comes here thinks 'Apparently the proper thing here is to go round' and starts going round. Thus all people go round. After all, the proper *pradakshina* is going round the Self, or, more accurately, to realise that we are the Self and that within us all the countless spheres revolve, going round and round, as described in the following stanza of *Ribhu Gita* (3rd Chapter, 39th Verse).

பூரணவா நந்தான்மா வகமென் றெண்ணல்
புகழ்புட்பாஞ் சலியாகு மநந்த கோடி

காரியமாம் பிரமாண்ட மென்னி டத்தே
கற்பிதமாய்ச் சுழலுமெனந் தியானந் தானே

நேரதுவாய் வலம்வரலா மென்று மென்னை
நிகிலருமே வந்திப்பார் நானெப் போது
மாரையுமே வந்திக்கே னென்னுந் தியான
மான்மமகா லிங்கத்தினை வணங்கலாமே.

An English translation of this stanza is as follows:

Reflecting "I am the all-blissful Self"
Is worship as with words and flowers.
True circumambulation is the thought,
"In me the million universes roll",
He who knows all beings bow to him
And he to none,
He bows before the Mahalinga-Self.

"Some go on doing a number of *namaskarams, e.g.* that Janaki, she goes on striking her head down countless times along with *namaskarams*. She goes round a number of times. At each window she falls down and does a number of *namaskarams.* However much I tell her, she won't leave off such practices." Somebody here interjected, "It seems she is known to Bhagavan since her childhood." Bhagavan said, "Yes, yes," and continued, "There are others who come and fall before me while I am moving. They lie prostrate for some minutes. I cannot stand for them on account of my physical infirmity. So I walk on, telling myself, 'Only if we do *namaskarams* we will be benefited. After all, true *namaskaram* is only the giving up the 'I'-sense, or killing the ego'."

I said, "Bhagavan himself advises us to go round the Hill, for instance. I know Bhagavan is also not against going round the image in a temple. There are people here who have the faith that going round Bhagavan is as good as going round the temple-image or the Hill. How can we object to that?" Bhagavan said, "I don't say such things should not be done. But the best

going round is going round yourself, or the *bhava* expressed in the verse quoted. The other *pradakshinams* are not condemned. The *jnani*, though he knows that meditation on the Self is the best worship, will join in all the other kinds of worship for the good of others and as an example to them. In fact, he may observe all the other ways even more correctly and steadfastly than those who follow only those paths and know nothing of *jnana*. That is referred to in the following verse, also occurring in *Ribhu Gita*.

தந்தைமுதன் மரணத்திற் பந்து வின்றித்
தளர்தனயன் றிரவியமே தந்த ழைத்து
வந்தசன மழுகின்ற நீதி யன்னேன்
வழங்குதனப் பொருட்டன்றி யுண்மை யன்றே
யந்தவித மாசிரியன் சீட னுக்கிங்
கத்துவிதம் புகலுங்காற் றுதவித மோதல்;
மைந்தவிதி லேயமிலை யதனற் றெற்த
மறந்தென்று மத்துவித வடிவே யாவாய்.

The gist is, "If the Guru refers to *dvaita* when teaching *advaita* to the disciple, it is not to be regarded as his real teaching any more than one should regard as real the grief of one who weeps because he is paid to do so."

When Bhagavan quoted the first verse above extracted, I went and brought the book for his reference. He took it in his hand and opened it. The book opened exactly where the passage is found. Such a thing has happened many others times too.

In the afternoon I was reading a recent issue of *Prabuddha Bharata*. There I found that one disciple asked Shivananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, "It is said Paramahamsa once said, 'Those who have come here will have no more births.' Did you hear him say so? What does it mean? Will only those who came to him and saw in the flesh and worshipped him be saved, or even those who have only heard about him and worshipped him?" It is said Shivananda replied, "The above remark of Paramahamsa is found in all the books,

and it means that both classes of people will be saved, provided however they have surrendered unto him."

I pointed out, "All that Paramahamsa said was, 'Those who have come here will have salvation.' Why do these people make this addition, 'provided they surrender unto him?' If a man makes complete surrender to God, Self or Guru he is of course saved. That is well known. To a man who is able to make complete surrender, *sat sang* is superfluous." Bhagavan said, "When Paramahamsa said 'People who come here' the words really imply 'People who have come and surrendered themselves here'." I said, "If he meant it, would he not have said so? I believe there are people, to approach whom, is to obtain salvation, whether we are able to surrender completely or not. Did not all the crowd that went to attend Saint Sambandar's marriage, including the pipers and drummers, get salvation? The drummer and piper had no idea of making complete surrender." Bhagavan remained silent. Then he said, "It is said Sundarar got a *vimana* and went to heaven and that he invited others to join him, but that none came forward. But in Tukaram's life it is said that he went to heaven with his body and that he took twenty-one people with him." To look up this last reference, I brought *Bhakta Vijayam* in Tamil and Bhagavan read how Tukaram, before going to heaven with his body, invited everyone to go with him and, after seven days, he went with twenty-two people to Heaven.

In this connection, I told Bhagavan, "It has come down as a sort of tradition, and I have also heard it said, that Bhagavan once told some disciples that those who are here (*i.e.*, with Bhagavan) need not worry about their salvation, even as upper class passengers, having informed the guard, may quietly go to sleep in their berths and will be awakened and detrained at their destination by the guard. I have not been able to find out when, where and to whom Bhagavan said words to the above effect." Bhagavan said nothing in reply. But so far as I am concerned, the fact that he did not deny it in words or by facial

expression is enough to convince me that Bhagavan must have, in some unguarded moment, uttered these words (of great hope to lazy men like me).

16-4-46

In the evening, after *parayana*, Muruganar brought a Tamil book and gave it to Bhagavan saying that the author had sent two copies of the book through Padananda. Thereupon Bhagavan asked M., "When did Padananda arrive?" and he replied, "Last night". On enquiry, Muruganar told me it was a book by Tiruttani Chengalroya Pillai, comparing the two famous poet-saints Tirumoolar and Arunagirinathar. Bhagavan said, "It is a short book and can be read out now either by you or Viswanath." V. was sitting in the front row before Bhagavan. I looked at all the rows behind, standing near the first row, and told Bhagavan, "V. is not here." Then Bhagavan showed V. to me and laughed saying, "Why, he is here." I said, "Then, let us ask him to read it. I have not got my glasses with me." Bhagavan remarked, "I see that is why you could not see Viswanathan." Then V. read out the pamphlet and we all heard it. Some Telugu visitor got up and requested Bhagavan that the matter should be translated or summarised in Telugu. But such translation seemed neither necessary nor feasible. The book did not strike any of us as worth all the trouble it must doubtless have entailed.

17-4-46

Yesterday morning itself, Viswanathan had given to Bhagavan a Tamil rendering of *Asal, Neevu Evaru, Ramana Bhagavan*? Bhagavan asked me yesterday afternoon if I had done the English translation. I had to say 'No'. So I sat down last night and revised the English translation which one Mr. Sitarama Rao had done for us and left with me. I fair-copied the revised draft and gave it to Bhagavan at 10-30 a.m. today. Soon after he began to peruse it, the second *tapal* arrived and he had to attend to it. After finishing it, though it was then five minutes to eleven,

Bhagavan took up the English translation for perusal and went on with it till the bell rang for lunch at 11 a.m.

Afternoon

Bhagavan continued reading the English translation and finished it after suggesting about half a dozen corrections.

18-4-46 Afternoon

Mr. Nanavati of Bombay asked Bhagavan, "In the fifth stanza of *Arunachala Pancharatna* reference is made to seeing 'Your form in everything'. What is the form referred to?" Bhagavan said, "The stanza says that one should completely surrender one's mind, turn it inwards and see 'you' the Self within and then see the Self in 'you' in everything. It is only after seeing the Self within that one will be able to see the Self in everything. One must first realise there is nothing but the Self and that he is that Self, and then only he can see everything as the form of the Self. That is the meaning of saying, 'See the Self in everything and everything in the Self', as is stated in the *Gita* and other books. It is the same truth that is taught in stanza 4 of the *Reality in Forty Verses*. If you have the idea that you are something with form, that you are limited by this body, and that being within this body you have to see through these eyes, God and the world also will appear to you as form. If you realise you are without form, that you are unlimited, that you alone exist, that you are the eye, the infinite eye, what is there to be seen apart from the infinite eye? Apart from the eye, there is nothing to be seen. There must be a seer for an object to be seen, and there must be space, time, etc. But if the Self alone exists, it is both seer and seen, and above seeing or being seen."

19-4-46 Morning

After Krishnaswami had been massaging for seven or eight minutes, Bhagavan said, "You have been massaging me.

It seemed to me as if I was not being massaged." And turning to me, he said, "Sometimes, when they are not massaging me, I feel as if I was being massaged. What to say?"

Somasundaram Pillai of Cuddalore returned after a visit to Tiruchuzhi, Madura, and other places, and was telling Bhagavan that the day he was at Madura it happened to be *Punarvasu Nakshatra,* and that devotees gathered in the Ramana Mandiram there, had *bhajan,* etc., and that there was milk and *vadai* for *naivedyam* which was afterwards distributed to all those who were present at the function. Just as he was saying this, Santhamma entered the hall, with milk for *naivedyam* and distribution, because she had just entered her new house. Bhagavan said, "You say milk was offered as *naivedyam,* and distributed to you. Here comes milk for the same purpose." S. continued to tell Bhagavan about his trip and Bhagavan asked, "Did you enquire in Tiruchuzhi, whether on *Masi Makam,* which was only a little before you went there, water rose in the temple tank as it used to do in my boyhood?" S. replied, "No. I took it for granted that even now the water rises and so did not make any enquiries." Then Bhagavan said that the water of the temple tank is reputed to cure many skin diseases and added, "That is certain. We have seen as boys that when we bathed in the tank our silver bangles all turned black, and we had to rub them well with mud before going back home, lest our parents should blame us for bathing in the tank. The water contains sulphur."

20-4-46 Afternoon

A Muslim visitor put some questions and got the following answers:

Question: This body dies. But there is another imperishable body. What is it?

Answer: 'Imperishable body' is a contradiction in terms. The term *sariram* means that which will perish. Of course,

there is something imperishable, something which exists even after the body dies.

Question: It is said the Lord's light resides in the eye.

Answer: The eye does not see. That which gives light to it is the reality, whether we call it Lord's light or anything else.

Question: The Lord has created all this, has He not? What was created first? It is said light or sound was created first.

Answer: All these things, which you say have been created have to be seen by you before you say they exist. There must be a seer. If you find out who that seer is, then you will know about creation and which was created first. Of course various theories as to what came into existence first from God are given out. Most, including scientists, agree that all has come from light and sound.

Question: Can we call anything created, like this piece of wood, for example, God? It is said it is very wrong to do so.

Answer: Even this piece of wood, does it exist apart from God? Can we confine God to any time or place, since He is everywhere and in everything? We should not see anything as apart from God. That is all.

22-4-46 Afternoon

Nagamma told Bhagavan the two latest poems in Telugu by Naganariya *Skandasrama Santarsanam* and *Ghooha jnani* had not yet been read out in the hall and that *Athai* (*i.e.*, Bhagavan's sister) and others wanted to hear them, and took permission from Bhagavan and read out the same.

Later, Mr. Rajagopala Sarma, Sanskrit Pandit in Maharajah's College at Pudukottah, came and introduced himself to Bhagavan, saying that he was well known to our Lakshmana Sarma, and that, though he had often heard about Bhagavan, he had got the

privilege of seeing Bhagavan only now, for the first time. Then he read out three slokas composed by him in praise of Bhagavan, and also explained the same to us in Tamil. In these slokas the Pandit compares Bhagavan to the moon but finds him superior in some respect. Here is a gist of the slokas: "Like the moon, you bring coolness and pleasantness to all. If there is a difference between you and the moon, it is in your favour. The moon brings sorrow to separated lovers. But you give pleasure to all without exception by your kind grace. The moon has its dark fortnight. But you are ever shining.

"The moon is eagerly awaited by the *chakora* bird which feeds on the nectar flowing from the moon. So are all the *bhaktas* gathered here, eagerly awaiting, and being benefited by the nectar of your presence and speech.

"The flower *kuvalaya* blossoms on the moon rising. The hearts of the entire *kuvalaya* (the world), or the hearts of all men, blossom on seeing you.

"Moonlight disperses the gloom of the night which hides the objects in the world. Thy light dispels the darkness of *ajnana* which hides the reality from us.

"The moon is worn by Siva on the crown of His head. All creation or Brahma bears you on His head.

"The moon was born in the Milky Ocean. You are born in the ocean of Vedanta."

24-4-46 Afternoon

When Chinta Dikshitulu's *Ramana Gopalan* first came here, Mr. D.S. Sastri sent us an English translation of the article. It was read out before Bhagavan and we thought at the time a few corrections were needed. Mauni took the translation for the above correction. But it seems to have lain long with him, without being attended to. So, Nagamma

brought it back three or four days ago and gave it to me and asked me to do the revision. Bhagavan asked me this afternoon if I had finished the work. I replied, "I had the Telugu read out to me by Nagamma only last evening and started writing the revised translation this morning. When I came to the sentence in which *thaga, thaga* occurs I wanted to see how our Viswanath had rendered it in Tamil. I got the Tamil rendering only at 11 a.m. I am going on with the work and shall finish it soon." Then we discussed the words *mutte, thaga thaga, eppatiki appudu,* etc., occurring in the original article. I finished the revision and gave it to Bhagavan. He asked me to keep it along with the other translations. I gave them to Nagamma and requested her to bind all together for future reference. Nagamma asked Bhagavan for the three slokas in Sanskrit by the Pudukottah Pandit and offered to write them down in the *stotra* notebook. We found they had already been copied by Viswanath. Bhagavan took up the slokas and read them out. I took advantage of this, to read my summary of the first of these *slokas* as given in this diary and see if Bhagavan thought it fairly correct. Bhagavan gave me the compliment of remarking, "How did you manage to remember all this and write them down in your notebook?" I had omitted reference in my account to Bhagavan having been born in the ocean of Vedanta, while the moon was born in the milky ocean. During this reading I added this also.

While I was at Nagamma's place on the 23rd evening, to get the Telugu *Ramana Gopalan* read out to me, she said in the course of conversation, "You are filling up book after book. But I have written only little." (This was with reference to accounts of significant utterances by Bhagavan about which she has been writing letters regularly to her brother at Madras, and keeping copies herself). I told Bhagavan now, "Nagamma says I am writing all sorts of rubbish and filling up book after book; and that she will record only important events or statements."

This I said somewhat in jest. Poor Nagamma came out "Can you utter lies like these, even in Bhagavan's presence?" I replied laughing, "They are not exactly lies."

Evening

Throughout the day the *Sarvadhikari* has been inviting all *bhaktas* to have a look at a clay model of Bhagavan which the Madras sculptor engaged to make Bhagavan's statue, has prepared here. After *parayana,* Mr. Narayanaswami Iyer, retired drawing master, came to Bhagavan and expressed his opinion that the model was not satisfactory. He wanted Bhagavan's opinion. Bhagavan only said, "Don't ask me. How can one know one's own face? How can I judge this clay model?" Poor N. Iyer was disappointed. Bhagavan added after a while, "Each person has a different opinion. Rangaswami says the nose is too big, and the sculptor actually measures it and shows it is correct. But R. says, the nose looks too big. What are we to do? Supposing someone produces the most exact possible resemblance, I wonder whether even then if all those who look at the result will give the same unanimous verdict."

Mr. N. Iyer again came when we were all starting with Bhagavan for the night meal, and pleaded that he must give his opinion to please his *bhaktas*. He said he would produce two big mirrors and that Bhagavan could first study his own face standing between the two mirrors and then judge the clay model and give his frank opinion. Bhagavan stoutly refused to do any such thing.

25-4-46 Morning

When Bhagavan returned from his stroll about 7-30 a.m. and entered the hall, he said, "As I was getting up the steps to get into the Asramam compound I was saying, 'How is it Dr. T.N.K. has not arrived? If he came by the

morning train, he should have arrived by now.' Before I closed my mouth, I find T.N.K. before me. I wonder if it was his being here that made me think of him. I think of him and there he is before me." Then Bhagavan told T.N.K., "It must have been a great inconvenience for you to rush up like this now. These people wouldn't listen to me. They wired to you. They wired to the *sthapati.* The *sthapati* replied he could not come now. They have now sent a man to fetch him. I don't know if the *sthapati* is going to come after all. All this is quite unnecessary. But they won't heed me."

When discussing some days ago the meaning of *dakshina parsam* occurring in *Asal Neevu Evaru*, Bhagavan wanted to know if the image of Dakshinamurti in the Madras museum has its head turned to the right, looking at the heart-centre there. Bhagavan then remarked, "If we write to Dr. T.N.K., he will at once take a photo of the image and send it." Nagamma reminded Bhagavan of this in the hall this morning, soon after Dr. T.N.K. left the hall. So, soon after, I brought Dr. T.N.K. again into the hall and Bhagavan asked him to take and send a photo of the image or images of Dakshinamurti in the museum. Bhagavan also enquired if the museum authorities would object. Dr. T.N.K. replied they would not, and that they might even have photos of the image or images already with them. He also wanted to have for reference with him, the sentence in the article describing the image of Dakshinamurti. So I gave him the extract, with a translation in Tamil.

A visitor asked Bhagavan, "When I try to be without all thoughts, I pass into sleep. What should I do about it?"

Bhagavan: Once you go to sleep, you can do nothing in that state. But while you are awake, try to keep away all thoughts. Why think about sleep? Even that is a thought, is it not? If you are able to be without any thought while you are awake, that is enough. When you pass into sleep, that state, in

which you were before falling asleep, will continue and again, when you wake up, you will continue from where you had left off when you fell into slumber. So long as there are thoughts of activity, so long would there be sleep also. Thought and sleep are counterparts of one and the same thing.

Bhagavan quoted the *Gita* and said, "We should not sleep very much or go without it altogether, but sleep only moderately. To prevent too much sleep, we must try and have no thoughts or *chalana* (movement of the mind), we must eat only *sattvic* food and that only in moderate measure, and not indulge in too much physical activity. The more we control thought, activity and food the more shall we be able to control sleep. But moderation ought to be the rule, as explained in the *Gita*, for the *sadhak* on the path. Sleep is the first obstacle, as explained in the books, for all *sadhaks.* The second obstacle is said to be *vikshepa* or the sense objects of the world which divert one's attention. The third is said to be *kashaya* or thoughts in the mind about previous experiences with sense objects. The fourth, *ananda,* is also called an obstacle, because in that state a feeling of separation from the source of *ananda*, enabling the enjoyer to say 'I am enjoying *ananda*' is present. Even this has to be surmounted and the final stage of *samadhana* or *samadhi* has to be reached, where one becomes *ananda* or one with the reality and the duality of enjoyer and enjoyment ceases in the ocean of *sat-chit-ananda* or the Self."

26-4-46 Morning

Bhagavan asked me if I had seen Colombo Ramachandra's letter received by the Asramam yesterday. I said, "No." Thereupon he told me, "R. has written enclosing Gunaratna's letter. He says that this is the first time any saint's life is written in the Sinhalese language. It seems, if they try to bring out the book in time for the Jubilee occasion here, it may have to be greatly abridged. I don't know what they are

going to do. The *Ashtakam*, which R. wrote when here, has also been given for publication, and he will be getting the printed copies in a day or two."

I told Bhagavan, "Yes. Even when here, R. already sent it to the press, while he had written only five of the poems. He wanted it as a folder with Bhagavan's picture on the first page. But he had asked me not to mention it to Bhagavan just then."

Meanwhile, Mr. Somasundaram Pillai said that in R.'s letter it is stated that the Ramakrishna Mission, after coming to know of what we have done about the Tiruchuzhi house, are taking steps to secure the house where the Paramahamsa was born, and make it a place of pilgrimage and worship.

Then Bhagavan said, "The *bhattar* at Tiruchuzhi might have been expecting Ramachandra at Tiruchuzhi on his way back from here to Colombo. Does he know of R. having gone back?"

Somasundaram Pillai: I told him all about R. and how I had to escort him as far as Dhanushkodi.

Bhagavan: It seems the *bhattar* has been invited to Vadapuri to attend some special function there, in celebration of Saint Manikkavachagar.

Then we began talking of Vadavoor, which Bhagavan said was only about twenty miles from Madura, and also of Perundurai; there is much controversy among research scholars whether Perundurai of *Tiruvachakam* is the place called Avudayarkoil where there is a temple, and a tradition that Saint Manikkavachakar built it, or whether it is some place farther west. Bhagavan said, "All sorts of theories are put forward, with ingenious and far-fetched arguments both for and against."

Later, the Mauni wanted for reference the poems composed and left here by Dilip Kumar Roy of Aurobindo Ashram, when he was here last, and also the poem by Mr. Chadwick in which

he had addressed Bhagavan, "You will not let me go." I searched in the files and could get only D.K. Roy's. Then I got from Mr. Chadwick a copy of his poems which, we found, had been composed in 1941. I gave both Roy's and Chadwick's poems to Mauni.

Evening

After *parayana,* when the monkeys were getting their usual parting gifts of fruit of the day, Bhagavan recounted his old experiences with monkeys at Skandasramam, and how his favourite Nondippaiyan (the lame one) hurt him twice. After the monkeys were supplied, there was one plantain left, and Bhagavan said "Give it to these children" pointing to four of them who were there and adding, "these are tail-less monkeys."

27-4-46 Morning

The priest of a temple at Dwaraka, returning from Aurobindo's Ashram, visited Bhagavan and asked him in Sanskrit, "I wish to get *sakshatkara* of Sri Krishna. What should I do to get it?" This question was put while Bhagavan was reading a rather long letter from Lt. Shroff, which his wife had brought. The letter closed with the sentiment: "Do what you will to me. Send me health or sickness, riches or poverty." Bhagavan said with reference to the priest's question, "I did not want to disturb his faith, but wanted to tell him 'Just leave it to Sri Krishna, — even this *sakshatkara* of Krishna.' And this letter of Shroff contains the same thing."

After saying this, Bhagavan added, "What is your idea of Sri Krishna and what do you mean by *sakshatkara*?" On this, the priest replied, "I mean the Sri Krishna who lived in Brindavan and I want to see him as the Gopis saw him."

Bhagavan replied, "You see, you think he is a human being or one with a human form, the son of so and so, etc., whereas he himself has said, 'I am in the Heart of all beings,

I am the beginning, the middle and the end of all forms of life.' He must be within you, as within all. He is your *Atman* or the *atman* of your *Atman.* So if you see this entity or have *sakshatkara* of it, you will have *sakshatkara* of Krishna. *Atma Sakshatkara* and *sakshatkara* of Krishna cannot be different. However, to go your own way, surrender completely to Krishna and leave it to Him to grant the *sakshatkara* you want."

29-4-46 Afternoon

Mr Nanavati asked Bhagavan, "What is the heart referred to in the verse in *Upadesa Saram* where it is said 'Abiding in the heart is the best *karma, yoga, bhakti* and *jnana*'?"

Bhagavan: That which is the source of all, that in which all live, and that into which all finally merge, is the heart referred to.

Nanavati: How can we conceive of such a heart?

Bhagavan: Why should you conceive of anything? You have only to see wherefrom the 'I' springs.

Nanavati: I suppose mere *mauna* in speech is no good; but we must have *mauna* of the mind.

Bhagavan: Of course. If we have real *mauna,* that state in which the mind is merged into its source and has no more separate existence, then all other kinds of *mauna* will come of their own accord, *i.e.*, the *mauna* of words, of action and of the mind or *chitta.*

Bhagavan also quoted in this connection, the following from Thayumanavar.

"சித்த மவுனஞ் செயல்வாக் கெலாமவுனஞ்
சுத்த மவுனமென்பால் தோன்றிற் பராபரமே"

[If I get pure *mauna* (quiescence), I shall have *mauna* of *chitta,* mind, word and deed]. Bhagavan added, "Such *mauna* is not inertness but great activity. It is the most powerful speech."

Mr. Ramasubba Iyer was taking out a book from the Asramam Library. Bhagavan asked him what book it was. He said he was taking a copy of *Nannool*, because he wanted to learn '*யாப்பியல்*' or prosody. Bhagavan thereupon advised him to take another book dealing with prosody called '*யாப்பிலக்கணம்*' or, '*அணியிலக்கணம்*', as *Nannool* gives only a brief treatment of prosody. Bhagavan then fell into a discourse on various metres and told us something about Tamil prosody and how there are six parts in Tamil poetry — *எழுத்து, அசை, சீர், தளை, அடி* & *தொடை*. Bhagavan continued, "*Venba* is very difficult to make, even more difficult than the *arya vrittams* in Sanskrit, as Kavyakantha himself had to admit once to me. *Venba* is described as a 'tiger' even to pandits. It will overcome even great poets. Of course, all this is only spoiling one's peace of mind. When great effort is put forth to do all sorts of literary gymnastics, what is the result but loss of peace of mind? Sometimes, the first '*சீர்*' in all the four lines will appear to be the same word or words. But, when with great skill the words are split up differently in each line, the meanings would be found to be different." From this the talk drifted to how by training the mind people achieve such wonderful things as *satavadhana* (attending to a hundred things at the same time) and Bhagavan described how Nayana (Kavyakantha Ganapati Sastri) used to do *satavadhana* in Bhagavan's presence, how it was really wonderful, how Nayana used to say that, what he was exhibiting was only a thousandth part of the powers of memory and mind he had developed, and how Nayana once composed three hundred stanzas of his *Uma Sahasram* between eight and twelve one night dictating different chapters to different writers at the same time.

2-5-46 Morning

A visitor asked, "I have been visiting various shrines in a pilgrimage, and worshipping various images. What exactly is God's true form?"

Bhagavan: The only thing to know is that there is an entity who is in all these forms, but who is not these forms. We see the One in the many. We see the One as many, the Formless in the forms.

In the afternoon, T.P.R. asked Bhagavan where the *ஊர்ந்து குடிச்சான் சுனை* (the name of a spring) is on the Hill and Bhagavan described the locality and said it was first shown to him by a woodcutter. Bhagavan continued, "In those days I used to go all by myself. For answering calls of nature I used to stroll along, taking no water with me, but going wherever water may be available. It was on one such occasion, on one morning, that I came across the banyan tree of which I have spoken often.

"As I was walking in the bed of a hill-stream, I saw a big banyan tree on a boulder, with big leaves, and crossing the stream I wanted to get to the other bund and view from there this big tree. When I accidentally put my left foot near a bush on the way to the other bank, the hornets clustered round my left leg up to the knee and went on stinging. They never did anything to my right leg. I left the left leg there for some time, so that the hornets could inflict full punishment on the leg which had encroached on their domain. After a time, the hornets withdrew and I walked on. The leg got swollen very much and I walked with difficulty and reached 'Ezhu Sunai' (Seven Springs) about 2 a.m., and Jadaswami, who was camping there then, gave me some buttermilk mixed with jaggery which was all that he could provide by way of food. This is what actually happened. But afterwards, people have gone and written that I had purposely set out to explore and find out the banyan tree described in the *purana* as the one on the northern peak of the Hill, where Arunachala is said to be residing as a *siddha.* I never had any such idea. When I saw for the first time a remarkable banyan tree on a huge and precipitous boulder, I was prompted by curiosity to have a look at it. Meanwhile, the hornets stung me and I forgot all about the tree."

In the afternoon, an European walked into the hall, sat in a corner and walked away after a few minutes. Bhagavan turned to me and asked me if I didn't know him. I told Bhagavan I had seen him here before, but I had forgotten his name. He is a friend of Mr. McIver. Bhagavan said, "His name is Evelyn. His wife — don't you know he married that Parsi girl who used to come and stay with Mrs. Taleyarkhan — has written to Viswanathan to look after her husband, saying he had come out of the hospital and that he is better now."

5-5-46 Afternoon

Mr. Kasturi Chetti brought news that Ganapati Sastri had passed away that morning, and that hernia was the cause. Talking about G. Sastri, Bhagavan said he was a great friend of Grant Duff, that he was a great lover of books, and that he would promptly buy (not necessarily read) all good books that came out and keep them in his library.

Bhagavan said, "Some rare books, which could not be got elsewhere, were available with him." Mr. T.P.R. said Bhagavan was once waylaid and taken to G.'s house to see the library he had collected. Bhagavan said, "It was he who got the *Ramana Gita* written in Nagari characters. Nayana wrote it down in Telugu characters."

Evening

About two days ago, four books in French were received from Swami Siddheswarananda in Paris. In the letter the Swami wrote, "I hope the French devotee Mrs. Sen is still there. I meet her friends here. If she is there, she may be able to tell Bhagavan about the references in those books to Bhagavan." So Bhagavan asked me to give those books to Mrs. Sen for perusal. This evening she came and said, "In these books reference is made to Bhagavan as a perfect *sthita prajna*, though some other words in French

are used for *sthita prajna*." Thereupon, Bhagavan read out to her the verses in *Vivekachudamani* (from the English translation) which describes a *sthita prajna*. Bhagavan also told us how the *Bhagavad Gita* describes the same man as *sthita prajna* in Chapter II, later on in dealing with *bhakti*, as *bhagavat bhakta*, later still as *gunatita* (or beyond *gunas*). This Bhagavan said when I read in *Vivekachudamani* the verses that follow those that describe a *sthita prajna*. These deal with the *jivanmukta* (one liberated while yet alive). A *sthita prajna* is described as one who has attained steady illumination in *Vivekachudamani*. I asked Bhagavan if these terms were not intended to denote the same class. It was then that Bhagavan referred to the Gita passages.

5-5-46

In answer to a visitor, Bhagavan said, "Find out to whom is *Viyoga*. That is yoga. Yoga is common to all paths. Yoga is really nothing but ceasing to think that you are different from the Self or Reality. All the yogas — karma, *jnana, bhakti* and *raja* — are just different paths to suit different natures with different modes of evolution and to get them out of the long cherished notion that they are different from the Self. There is no question of union or yoga in the sense of going and joining something that is somewhere away from us or different from us, because you never were or could be separate from the Self."

In the afternoon I showed Bhagavan the passage in today's *Sunday Times* where Dr. T.M.P. Mahadevan, in his radio talk, quotes Sri Shankara's reference to his own experience as proof of the existence of the *jivanmukta* and about the controversies concerning various kinds of *mukti*. He read out passages from a Tamil book called அத்வைத உண்மை (*The Truth of Advaita*) in which all doubts about the state of the *jivanmukta* are raised and answered. Then he said:

"Various illustrations are given in books to enable us to understand how the *jnani* can live and act without the mind,

although living and acting require the use of the mind. The potter's wheel goes on turning round even after the potter has ceased to turn it because the pot is finished. In the same way, the electric fan goes on revolving for some minutes after we switch off the current. The *prarabdha* which created the body will make it go through whatever activities it was meant for. But the *jnani* goes through all these activities without the notion that he is the doer of them. It is hard to understand how this is possible. The illustration generally given is that the *jnani* performs actions in some such way as a child that is roused from sleep to eat, eats but does not remember next morning that it ate. It has to be remembered that all these explanations are not for the *jnani*. He knows and has no doubts. He knows that he is not the body and is not doing anything even though his body may be engaged in some activity. These explanations are for the onlookers who think of the *jnani* as one with a body and cannot help identifying him with his body.

"There are various controversies or schools of thought as to whether a *jnani* can continue to live in his physical body after realization. Some hold that one who dies cannot be a *jnani*, because his body must vanish into air, or some such thing. They put forward all sorts of funny notions. If a man must at once leave his body when he realises the Self, I wonder how any knowledge of the Self or the state of realisation can come down to other men. And that would mean that all those who have given us the fruits of their Self-realisation in books cannot be considered *jnanis* because they went on living after realisation. And if it is held that a man cannot be considered a *jnani* so long as he performs actions in the world (and action is impossible without the mind), then not only the great Sages who carried on various kinds of work after attaining *jnana* must not be considered *jnanis*, but the gods also, and *Ishwara* Himself, since He continues looking after the world. The fact is that any amount of action can be performed, and performed quite well, by the

jnani without his identifying himself with it in any way or ever imagining that he is the doer. Some power acts through his body and uses his body to get the work done."

Bhagavan has said the same on previous occasions also. He continued to speak about *mukti* and said, "*Mukti* is not anything to be attained. It is our real nature. We are always That. It is only so long as one feels that he is in bondage that he has to try to get released from bondage. When a man feels that he is in bondage he tries to find out for whom is the bondage and by that enquiry discovers that there is no bondage for him but only for the mind, and that the mind itself disappears or proves non-existent when turned inwards instead of outwards towards sense-objects; it merges into its source, the Self, and ceases to exist as a separate entity. In that state there is no feeling either of bondage or liberation. So long as one speaks of *mukti* he is not free from the sense of bondage."

The visitor who had asked about yoga in the morning now pursued his questions further.

Visitor: I did not quite grasp all that Bhagavan said this morning. What am I to do when the mind strays in various directions during *dhyana*?

Bhagavan: Simply draw the mind back each time it strays and fix it in *dhyana*. There is no other way. (Bhagavan also quoted Chapter VI, Verse 26 from the *Bhagavad Gita* which says the same thing).

Visitor: Then is there no use in *pranayama* (breath control)? Should I not practise it?

Bhagavan: Pranayama is also a help. It is one of the various methods that are intended to help us attain *ekagratha* or one-pointedness of mind. *Pranayama* can also help to control the wandering mind and attain this one-pointedness and therefore it can be used. But one should not stop there.

After obtaining control of the mind through *pranayama* one should not rest content with any experiences which may accrue therefrom but should harness the controlled mind to the question 'Who am I?' till the mind merges in the Self.

The visitor further asked whether in his meditation he could use forms and images of God and *mantras*.

Bhagavan: Yes, of course. All these things can help, or why should they be recommended in the books? Various things are prescribed to suit various natures. Each person must choose what seems easiest and appeals to him most.

6-5-46

At about 10 o'clock this morning, in the presence of Bhagavan, the corner-stone was laid for the New Hall that Bhagavan is to sit in, in front of the temple of the Mother. The foundation was laid on January 25th, 1945, and is now ready to be built upon.

In the afternoon a visitor, Lakshmi Narayana Sastri from Vizianagaram, read out portions of his book for Bhagavan's approval and blessing. It is a Telugu verse rendering of Kavyakantha Ganapati Sastri's Sanskrit book *Uma Sahasram* with commentary.

7-5-46

In the afternoon L.N. Sastri again read out portions of his book. Bhagavan asked how much was already translated and he replied only about one century. He also read out a few poems that he himself had composed in praise of Bhagavan under the title *Atma Nivedanam* and prayed for Bhagavan's blessings. He told Bhagavan that he had applied to the publishers of the Sanskrit original that he was translating, for permission to publish his translation, but the permission had not yet come. Bhagavan said: "It will come; there will be no difficulty."

I could not judge these poems, as they are in Telugu, but Nagamma tells me they are very good and L.N. Sastri is a poet of some standing.

8-5-46

In the afternoon there was the following talk with a young *sadhu* from North India:

Sadhu: I want to know who I am. The Arya Samajists say that I am the *jivatma* and that if I purify the mind and *buddhi* I can see God. I don't know what to do. If Bhagavan thinks fit, will Bhagavan please tell me what to do?

Bhagavan: You have used a number of terms. What do you mean by *jivatma*, mind, *buddhi* and God? And where is God and where are you that you should want to go and see God?

Sadhu: I don't know what all these terms mean.

Bhagavan: Then never mind what the Arya Samajists tell you. You don't know about God and other things, but you do know that you exist. You can have no doubt about that. So find out who you are.

Sadhu: That is what I want to know. How can I find out?

Bhagavan: Keep all other thoughts away and try to find out in what place in your body the 'I' arises.

Sadhu: But I am unable to think about this.

Bhagavan: Why? If you can think about other things you can think about 'I' and where in your body it arises. If you mean that other thoughts distract you, the only way is to draw your mind back each time it strays and fix it on the 'I'. As each thought arises, ask yourself: "To whom is this thought?" The answer will be, "to me"; then hold on to that "me".

Sadhu: Am I to keep on repeating "Who am I?" so as to make a *mantra* of it?

Bhagavan: No. 'Who am I?' is not a *mantra*. It means that you must find out where in you arises the I-thought which is the source of all other thoughts. But if you find this *vichara marga* too hard for you, you can go on repeating "I, I" and that will lead you to the same goal. There is no harm in using 'I' as a *mantra*. It is the first name of God.

God is everywhere, but it is difficult to conceive Him in that aspect, so the books have said, "God is everywhere. He is also within you. You are Brahman." So remind yourself: "I am Brahman". The repetition of 'I' will eventually lead you to realise "I am Brahman".

* * * *

A young man called Krishna Jivrajani from Karachi said, "When I reach the thoughtless stage in my *sadhana* I enjoy a certain pleasure, but sometimes I also experience a vague fear which I cannot properly describe."

Bhagavan: You may experience anything, but you should never rest content with that. Whether you feel pleasure or fear, ask yourself who feels the pleasure or the fear and so carry on the *sadhana* until pleasure and fear are both transcended and all duality ceases and the Reality alone remains.

There is nothing wrong in such things happening or being experienced, but you must never stop at that. For instance, you must never rest content with the pleasure of *laya* experienced when thought is quelled but must press on until all duality ceases.

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L.N. Sastri has now written out a fair copy of his verses to Bhagavan. He read it out to Bhagavan and gave it to Bhagavan. He then said: "I have stayed here for three days. If Bhagavan gives me leave I shall go tonight; if not I shall stay two days more." As usual in such cases, Bhagavan made no reply. He took leave of Bhagavan in the evening and departed.

9-5-46

Nagamma asked me to get her the Asramam book in which Telugu poems are written so that she could copy in it those of L.N. Sastri. I took it out and gave it to her. Then I told Bhagavan: "It seems that this L.N. Sastri is a great poet. Nagamma is all praise for his poems and tells me he is about the best Telugu poet who has come to Bhagavan for the past five or six years." G. Subba Rao said: "Yes, I agree, he is a great poet."

Bhagavan said, "He is a pandit in the Raja's College at Vizianagaram. Nobody would take him for such a great poet. He looks a very ordinary man. He wants to become an ஆசுகவி (one who can compose extempore poems on any given subject). But all this is only activity of the mind. The more you exercise the mind and the more success you have in composing verses or doing *satavadanam* (giving attention to many things at a time) the less peace you have. What use is it to acquire such accomplishments if you don't acquire peace? But if you tell such people this, it does not appeal to them. They can't keep quiet. They must be composing songs. As Nayana used to say: 'In going forward one can run any distance at any speed, but when it is a question of going backward, that is turning inwards, even one step is hard to take.'

"Somehow it never occurs to me to write any book or compose poems. All the songs I have made were made at the request of someone or other in connection with some particular event. Even the *Reality in Forty Verses*, of which so many commentaries and translations now exist, was not planned as a book but consists of verses composed at different times and afterwards arranged as a book by Muruganar and others. The only poems that came to me spontaneously and compelled me, as it were, to compose them, without anyone urging me to do so, are the *Eight Verses to Arunachala* and the *Eleven Verses to Arunachala*. The first day the opening words of the *Eleven Verses* suddenly came to me one morning, and even if I tried to suppress them, saying, 'What have I to do with these words?' they would not be suppressed till I composed a song beginning with them,

and all the words flowed easily without any effort. In the same way the second stanza was made the next day and the succeeding ones the following days, one each day. Only the tenth and eleventh were composed the same day. The next day I started out to go round the hill. Palaniswami was walking behind me, and after we had gone some way, Ayyaswami seems to have called him back and given him a pencil and paper saying, 'For some days now Swami has been composing poems every day. He may do so today as well, so you had better take this paper and pencil with you.' I learnt about this only when I noticed that Palani was not with me for a while but came and joined me later. That day, before I returned to Skandasramam, I wrote six of the eight stanzas in the *Ashtakam.* Either that evening or the next day Narayana Reddi came. He was at that time living in Vellore as an agent of Singer & Co. and he used to come from time to time. Ayyaswami and Palni told him about the poems and he said, 'Give them to me at once and I will go and print them.' He had already published some books about me. When he insisted on taking the poems, I told him he could do so and could publish the first eleven as பதிகம் (*padikam*) and the rest, which were in a different metre, as அஷ்டகம் (*ashtakam*). To make up the அஷ்டகம் I at once composed two more stanzas and he took all the 19 stanzas with him to get them published."

In this connection I told Bhagavan, "I hear Narayana Reddi is now at Tindivanam and that he stays confined in one room."

Bhagavan said, "That is all right. The mind must have peace; that is all that matters."

In the evening the girl Ramana Sundari came and told Bhagavan she was going to attend the marriage of her mother's uncle.

I asked Bhagavan if he remembered how, the last time she came back here, she ran up to Bhagavan and caught hold of Bhagavan's hands and said: "I have had to wait so long to see Bhagavan!"

Bhagavan said, "Yes, she rushed up to me when the others of her party were still far behind and took both my hands and pressed them to her heart and said: 'It is two years since I have seen Bhagavan!' Actually, I don't think it was two years; I think it was about a year; but apparently she felt so."

I said, "She was so overcome with emotion that she disregarded the Asramam rules about going right up to Bhagavan or touching him."

Ramaswami Pillai thereupon put in, "These rules don't apply in such cases."

This talk of exceptional cases reminded me of one instance, about which I now reminded Bhagavan. Some years ago a Brahmin lad of about 17 came here. I don't know what trouble he had at home, but one morning he said to Bhagavan: "I pray that what I have in mind may come to pass." And Bhagavan replied: "Yes, it will come to pass."

The lad came and told me about it but I did not believe him because Bhagavan had never, to my knowledge, made such a promise to any devotee, and this lad was coming to Bhagavan for the first time. But the next day he repeated the same request before taking leave and I actually heard Bhagavan say: "Yes, it will come to pass."

On hearing this, G. Subba Rao said: "I have had the good fortune to have a similar experience myself. Once when I was in trouble and asked Bhagavan about it Bhagavan actually said: 'Don't fear.' That was many years ago."

10-5-46

In the afternoon Krishna Jivrajani said to Bhagavan, "During *sadhana* I feel that something in me is going up. Is that right or should it go down?"

Bhagavan: Never mind whether anything goes up or down. Does it exist without you? Never forget that. Whatever

experience may come remember who has the experience and thus cling to 'I' or the Self.

Jivrajani: Bhagavan has said one must dive deep into oneself like pearl divers with breath and speech controlled and discover the Self or attain the Self. So does Bhagavan advise me to practise breath-control?

Bhagavan: Breath-control is a help in controlling the mind and is advised for such as find they cannot control the mind without some such aid. For those who can control their mind and concentrate, it is not necessary. It can be used at the beginning until one is able to control the mind, but then it should be given up. Since mind and *prana* rise from the same source, control of one gives control of the other also.

Jivrajani: Is it good to strain to achieve breath-control?

Bhagavan: No, straining is not good. Only a little *pranayama* should be done at the beginning — as much as is possible without undue strain.

Jivrajani: I have never been able to understand Bhagavan's explanation as to how *ajnana* comes about.

I put in, "Bhagavan has said, 'Find out to whom is the *ajnana* and then the doubt will be dispelled'."

Bhagavan: Ignorance of what ?

Jivrajani: Bhagavan has said that when the ego is submerged or killed something else arises within us as 'I-I'. Will Bhagavan please tell me more about that?

Bhagavan: Everyone has to find that out by his own experience. It cannot be described. In the same way, you say, "something goes up"; can you describe that?

Jivrajani: It is only by developing the intellect that intuition can be attained; in fact perfection of intellect is intuition, is that not so?

Bhagavan: How can that be? The merging of the intellect in the source from which it arose gives birth to intuition, as

you call it. The intellect is of use only to see outside things, the outside world. Perfection of the intellect would lead only to seeing the outside world well. But the intellect is of no use at all for seeing within, for turning inwards towards the Self. For that, it has to be killed or extinguished, or in other words it has to merge in the source from which it sprang.

Jivrajani: Has closing the eyes during meditation any efficacy?

Bhagavan: The eyes can be closed or open as one finds convenient. It is not the eyes that see. There is one who sees through the eyes. If he is turned inwards and is not looking through the eyes they can be open and yet nothing will be seen. If we keep our eyes closed it is the same to us whether the windows of this room are open or shut.

Jivrajani: Suppose there is some disturbance during meditation, such as mosquito bites, should one persist in meditation and try to bear the bites and ignore the interruption or drive the mosquitoes away and then continue the meditation?

Bhagavan: You must do as you find most convenient. You will not attain *mukti* simply because you refrain from driving away the mosquitoes, nor be denied *mukti* simply because you drive them away. The thing is to attain one-pointedness and then to attain *mano-nasa*. Whether you do this by putting up with the mosquito bites or driving the mosquitoes away is left to you. If you are completely absorbed in your meditation you will not know that the mosquitoes are biting you. Till you attain that stage why should you not drive them away?

11-5-46

L.N. Sastri, who had taken leave of Bhagavan on the 8th, returned today. After he left the Asramam I was talking to Bhagavan about him and said that his poems seemed good but that it was a pity he did not tell us their meaning, as the

Pudukottai Pundit had, and Bhagavan said: "He also would have explained them if you had asked him." So today I asked him, and at about 3 o'clock in the afternoon he gave the gist of the poems as follows:

"You, Bhagavan have realized the Self, turning away from the world and going inwards into yourself. You have come into the world for its benefit and uplift. I am always going out, attracted by the world and its objects; nor is there anything strange in this, since God has given me the senses and sense organs, between which and the things of the world he has created a natural and irresistible attraction. It is not possible to escape from this without the aid of a Guru who has himself escaped. I have been in search of a Guru, and today it has at last been my lot to come face to face with one, and I feel that today all my misery is ended. I have read books about the Self but had no actual experience. It is for you, endowed, as the great ones have said, with the nature and power of Lord Subrahmanya, as the embodiment of tenderness and mercy, come here for the uplift and enlightenment of the world, to take me up and bless me and save me, as I surrender myself completely to you."

When he had finished this explanation of his verses, he asked us to give him some subject on which he would try to compose verses extempore. We all said: "Why then, on Bhagavan. What other subject need we suggest?" So he composed a few verses on Bhagavan very fast and fluently. An advocate from Guntur who was there jotted them down, but in some places he could not keep pace with the poet and had to leave blanks.

In the evening M.V. Ramaswami Aiyar's son brought two printed copies of *Adhyatma Ramayanam* and gave them to Bhagavan, and Bhagavan immediately began going through them. M. V. R. Aiyar composed this work about a year ago but it has only just been printed.

14-5-46

At 11 o'clock this morning, the Asramam lunch-time, Bose's mother brought various dishes that she had specially prepared for Bhagavan and was serving them herself. She has brought food like this a number of times during recent weeks, and it means a good deal of cooking, since Bhagavan will not take anything unless there is enough for all to partake of it alike. Bhagavan asked me to tell her not to take all this trouble and to say that it was work enough to prepare food for her family and it was unnecessary to send things for so many people. He said: "Let her cook and eat her food at home, dedicating some of it to me, saying 'this is for Bhagavan'. They think I have special liking for one thing or another, but really I have not. All food is the same to me. I would gladly mix up all the different things served and take it all together, but those who have prepared the food and think, 'Bhagavan will like this' or 'Bhagavan will like that' would be disappointed, so I don't. Time was when I took pleasure in variety, but after realizing unity all that disappeared."

15-5-46

In answer to a visitor Bhagavan made the following remarks:

"You can have, or rather you will yourself be, the highest imaginable kind of happiness. All other kinds of happiness which you have spoken of as 'pleasure', 'joy', 'happiness', 'bliss' are only reflections of the *ananda* which, in your true nature, you are.

"You need not bother about the lights which you say you see around things and people. Whether lights are seen or sounds are heard or whatever may happen, never let go the enquiry 'Who am I?' Keep on asking inwardly: 'Who sees these lights or hears these sounds?'

"What do you mean by taking *sannyasa*? Do you think it means leaving your home or wearing robes of a certain

colour? Wherever you go, even if you fly up into the air, will your mind not go with you? Or can you leave it behind you and go without it?"

Another visitor asked Bhagavan for a benedictory foreword to a book he had written, called *The Destiny of Freedom* or something of that sort. He said that someone else had already agreed to write an introduction but he would be grateful if Bhagavan would write a few words conveying his message and blessing. Bhagavan explained to him that he had never done such a thing and therefore should not be expected to now. The visitor persisted, and I went to some trouble to convince him that all his persuasion would be in vain. Then he began saying that the world badly needs a spiritual message and that the youth of India and of the world are not properly brought up, since religion is not instilled into them, and so forth. I had to tell him that Bhagavan holds that before a man tries to reform the world he should first know himself, and then he can go about reforming the world if he still feels the inclination. I believe the visitor was still for continuing his argument but fortunately it was time for the *parayanam* and he was effectively stopped by our starting to chant.

23-5-46

I had been away for several days and this morning was standing at the doorway to the dining hall when Bhagavan entered, so I thought he saw me, but apparently he did not recognise me, so bad has his eyesight become. And yet he will not use his spectacles. At breakfast I was sitting in the first place in the row on his right and he recognised me and asked when I had arrived. I replied, "Last night, but it was after 9-30 when I arrived."

G.V. Subbaramayya had come while I was away and he was making a Telugu translation of a parody Bhagavan had

composed of a stanza by Avvai. Avvai's stanza goes: "Oh, pain-giving stomach, you will not go without food even for one day, nor will you take enough for two days at a time. You have no idea of the trouble I have on your account. It is impossible to get on with you."

Bhagavan immediately replied with a parody giving the stomach's complaint against the ego: "Oh ego! You will not give even an hour's rest to me, your stomach. Day after day, every hour, you keep on eating. You have no idea how I suffer; it is impossible to get on with you."

Then Bhagavan explained, "In the month of *Chittrai* in 1931, on full moon day, we had all eaten heavily and everyone was complaining of uneasiness in the stomach, so someone, I think the late Somasundaram, quoted this stanza of Avvai's. Then I said that the stomach had more cause to complain against us than we against it. It can be expected to work but it should be given some rest too and after taking rest it can work again. But we never give it a rest. It might not mind even having no rest if we gave it more food to digest only when it had finished digesting what we had already given, but we do not even do that; we load it with more food while it is still digesting the previous meal. So it has just cause for complaint. That is why I composed a stanza like that."

Then Bhagavan asked whether I had been shown the photograph of the Dakshinamurti image at Madras Museum that had been received at the Asramam during my absence. I said that I had not but that the Parsi boy, Framji's son, had told me about it. So Bhagavan asked T.P.R. to show it to me. I found it had the head turned to the right but the eyes looking rather to the left. When I mentioned this Bhagavan said: "Head and face are all the same; perhaps that is why he wrote — 'with face turned to the right'." Bhagavan was referring to a phrase in the letter that accompanied the photograph. Someone remarked that the gaze

seemed to be turned rather inwards than to the left and I must admit that it is so.

When I entered the hall in the afternoon Bhagavan was already explaining in answer to some questions put by Mr. Poonja, a Punjabi:

"I ask you to see where the 'I' arises in your body, but it is really not quite correct to say that the 'I' rises from and merges in the heart in the right side of the chest. The heart is another name for the Reality and it is neither inside nor outside the body; there can be no in or out for it, since it alone is. I do not mean by 'heart' any physiological organ or any plexus of nerves or anything like that, but so long as one identifies oneself with the body and thinks he is in the body he is advised to see where in the body the 'I'-thought rises and merges again. It must be the heart at the right side of the chest since every man, of whatever race and religion and in whatever language he may be saying 'I', points to the right side of the chest to indicate himself. This is so all over the world, so that must be the place. And by keenly watching the daily emergence of the 'I'-thought on waking and its subsiding in sleep, one can see that it is in the heart on the right side."

In the course of the day, G.V. Subbaramayya asked Bhagavan how Ganapati Sastri wrote his *Ramana Gita*, whether he took notes on the conversations and then wrote them out. Bhagavan replied, "Remembering such talks was child's play to him. He could listen to a long and learned lecture on some intricate subject and then at the end reproduce the gist of it accurately in the form of *sutras*, not omitting anything of importance that had been said. Once he and Arunachala Sastri, who was also a learned man, had a discussion. Ganapati Sastri took up the position of *drishti srishti*, that we create and then see, that is to say that the world has no objective reality apart from our minds, while Arunachala Sastri took up the opposite view of *srishti drishti*,

that creation exists objectively before we see it. Arunachala Sastri argued first and upheld his standpoint with a great display of logic and learning and many quotations. Then Ganapati Sastri wrote down in the form of *sutras* all that he had maintained and asked him whether the *sutras* gave a faithful summary of everything he had said. He agreed that they did, so Ganapati Sastri said: "Then now you will have my criticism and condemnation of it". He then expounded very ably the *advaitic* point of view, that the world is an illusion as world but real as Brahman, that it does not exist as world but exists and is real as Brahman. In the same way he could record any discussion he heard; so remarkable was his power of memory, that he must have reproduced the *Ramana Gita* in that way. It would have been mere child's play for him."

24-5-46

Crowds of devotees have already arrived for tomorrow's *Mahapuja*.* All is bustle and joy with devotees meeting again under Bhagavan's gracious watchful care. One of the arrivals was Mrs. Ranga Aiyar, the wife of Bhagavan's boyhood friend at Tiruchuzhi. She brought two ladies with her and introduced them to Bhagavan. Bhagavan asked her, "Has Ranga come?" and she said, "No".

In the afternoon she sang. After singing three songs from *Ramana Stuthi Panchakam* she sang a song from *Ramanamritam*. Bhagavan called G.V.S. and told him, "This is from the songs composed by Ranga Aiyar's son celebrating my 'marriage'." G.V.S. came and told me this and I told him that the author was the old lady's son and that she was Ranga Aiyar's wife.

25-5-46

*Mahapuja** was celebrated in a grand scale as usual.

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* Death Anniversary of the Mother of Bhagavan.

26-5-46

When today's mail came Bhagavan read a postcard and said, "Pichumani Aiyar of Madurai writes that Meenakshi is no more. Only this morning or yesterday I thought of her and now I get this news."

G.V.S. read out to Bhagavan two stanzas that he had composed on the occasion of his last visit. Their gist was, "On seeing your kindness to all sorts of animals, to squirrels, peacocks, dogs, cows and monkeys, how can one remain unaffected? One's very bones melt at it. All sorts of birds and beasts approach you, receive your glance and touch, and so attain salvation. Vouchsafe the same to this human animal and save it also."

In the afternoon Ramaswami Aiyar of Manamadura, a relative of Bhagavan, came and sat in the hall and Bhagavan said to him: "Do you know, Meenakshi is no more. We received this news from Pichu this morning. Only this morning or yesterday I thought of her as my last paternal aunt still surviving, and now she too has passed away."

After some further talk Bhagavan said, "Once before, when your wife was ill, I dreamed that I went and sat beside her bed and touched her and she opened her eyes and asked, 'Who is touching me?' and when she saw it was I, she said, 'Is it you? Then you can'. I do not know whether she had any corresponding dream."

G.V.S. Replied, "I asked about this and learned that Mrs.Ranga Aiyar had a corresponding dream that Bhagavan came and sat beside her and touched her."

In this connection, G.V.S. Said, "I was once present when Bhagavan's aunt came here — the one who fed him when he left for Tiruvannamalai — Bhagavan was specially gracious to her. I could not help wondering why Bhagavan was so gracious towards his aunt when he is said to have been harsh

towards his mother. Is it because Bhagavan wanted to help rid her of the natural feeling that Bhagavan was her son?"

Bhagavan kept quiet, and I too said that he must have behaved so deliberately in order to train her to see in him a *jnani* and not her son. He still did not answer but we gathered from his attitude that our surmise was correct. And then after some time Bhagavan said: "I used to say something harsh to her and she would cry, and then I would say, 'Go on, cry! The more you cry the better pleased I am'."

27-5-46

Nagamma's niece, a girl of about 9, wanted to know why Bhagavan would never leave Tiruvannamalai and go to visit his devotees. She put the question through G.V.S. but Bhagavan kept silent. However, she importuned G.V.S. to get a reply. Finally Bhagavan said: "You wanted to see me, so you came here, and as I am always here you were able to see me; but if I kept moving about you might not find me here. Many people come here and if I was absent they would have to go away disappointed. And even if I left here how do you know I should ever reach your house, when there are so many people in Tiruvannamalai and other towns on the way who would invite me to their houses. If I agreed to go to your house I should have to agree to go to their houses too, and I might never reach yours. And besides, all this crowd of people you see here would go with me. Even here I can't go anywhere or the whole crowd follow, like that time when I went to Skandasramam." He added, jokingly, "I am kept in confinement. This is my gaol."

28-5-46

In the afternoon Mrs. Ranga Aiyar sang almost the whole of the book *Ramanamritam* composed by her son about the 'marriage' of Bhagavan to *jnana*. Bhagavan listened very

graciously. One of the songs referred to an incident in his fifth or sixth year when, for something that he had done, his father said: "Take away his cloth and drive him out." I asked Bhagavan about this and it led him to talk about those early years and about a group photograph of his father and others that was taken in the hospital compound and another that was taken later of himself with his uncle. He said that it was from a copy of the group with his father, recovered from Ranga Aiyar's house, that we got the photograph of his father that hangs in the dining hall, but that the other photograph, the one with Bhagavan in it, had been lost.

In the evening, when Bhagavan was going out, Nagamma's niece was standing in his way and Bhagavan said, laughing, "If you want to take me you will have to tie me up and put me in a cart; that is the only way."

29-5-46

Bose: When the *Upanishads* say that all is Brahman, how can we say, like Shankara, that this world is *mithya* or illusory?

Bhagavan: Shankara also said that this world is Brahman or the Self. What he objected to is one's imagining that the Self is limited by the names and forms that constitute the world. He only said that the world does not exist apart from Brahman. Brahman or the Self is like the screen and the world is like the pictures on it. You can see the picture only so long as there is a screen. But when the seer himself becomes the screen only the Self remains. *Kaivalya Navaneeta* has asked and answered six questions about *maya*. They are instructive.

The first question is: What is *maya*? And the answer is: It is *anirvachaniya* or indescribable.

The second question is: To whom does it come? And the answer is: To the mind or ego who feels that he is a separate entity, who thinks: 'I do this' or 'this is mine'.

The third question is: Where does it come from and how did it originate? And the answer is: Nobody can say.

The fourth question is: How did it arise? And the answer is: Through non-*vichara*, through failure to ask: who am I?

The fifth question is: If the Self and *maya* both exist does not this invalidate the theory of *Advaita*? The answer is: It need not, since *maya* is dependent on the Self as the picture is on the screen. The picture is not real in the sense that the screen is real.

The sixth question is: If the Self and *maya* are one, could it not be argued that the Self is of the nature of *maya*, that is illusory? And the answer is: No; the Self can be capable of producing illusion without being illusory. A conjuror may create for our entertainment the illusion of people, animals and things, and we see all of them as clearly as we see him; but after the performance he alone remains and all the visions he had created have disappeared. He is not a part of the illusion but is real and solid.

30-5-46

Today again Bose reverted to the subject of *maya* and asked Bhagavan, "What is *Hiranyagarbha*?"

Bhagavan replied, "*Hiranyagarbha* is only another name for the *sukshma sarira* or *Ishwara.* The books use the following illustration to help explain creation. The Self is like the canvas for a painting. First a paste is smeared over it to close up the small holes that are in any cloth. This paste can be compared to the *antaryami* in all creation. Then the artist makes an outline on the canvas, and this can be compared to the *sukshma sarira* of all creation, for instance the light and sound, *nada*, *bindu*, out of which all things arise. Then the artist paints his picture with colours etc., in this outline, and this can be compared to the gross forms that constitute the world."

In the afternoon, T.P. Ramachandra Aiyar remarked: "Chadwick has a picture of Bhagavan in a recumbent posture

where Bhagavan looks a mere skeleton. I don't think anyone else has such a picture."

I said: It must have been taken at the time when Bhagavan was purposely under-eating.

Bhagavan said: Yes, for some time when I was at Skandasramam I used to take only one meal a day at 11 a.m. and nothing else. At that time I got very thin.

In connection with this, G.V.S. asked Bhagavan about his early days and whether he ever went about accepting alms. Then Bhagavan related how it was T.P. Ramachandra Aiyar's father who first took him by mere force to his house and fed him, and how the first time he begged for food was from Chinna Gurukal's wife. He went on to tell how after that he freely begged in almost all the streets of Tiruvannamalai. He said: "You cannot conceive of the majesty and dignity I felt while so begging. The first day, when I begged from Gurukal's wife, I felt bashful about it as a result of habits of upbringing, but after that there was absolutely no feeling of abasement. I felt like a king and more than a king. I have sometimes received stale gruel at some house and taken it without salt or any other flavouring, in the open street, before great pandits and other important men who used to come and prostrate themselves before me at my Asramam, then wiped my hands on my head and passed on supremely happy and in a state of mind in which even emperors were mere straw in my sight. You can't imagine it. It is because there is such a path that we find tales in history of kings giving up their thrones and taking to this path."

In illustration of this, Bhagavan told us a story of a king who renounced his throne and went begging, first outside the limits of his State, then in his own State, then in its capital city, and finally in the royal palace itself, and thus at last got rid of his ego-sense. After some time, when he was wandering as an ascetic in another State, he was chosen to be its king and accepted because

now that he had completely lost the sense of 'I' he could act any part in life as a mere witness and the cares of kingship no longer worried him. When his own former State heard of it, they also asked him to resume his kingship, and he did so, because however many kingdoms he might rule over, he realized now that he was not the doer but simply an instrument in God's hands.

Actually, Bhagavan did not finish the story, because when he was in the middle of it Mrs. Ranga Aiyar began to sing and he broke off and told us apologetically, "She is leaving tonight and wants to finish all her songs before she goes." I asked him for the rest of the story next day.

31-5-46

Mr. Phillips, an Englishman who used to be a missionary and is now a teacher and who has been about 20 years in Hyderabad, came this morning. He said: "I lost my son in the war. What is the way for his salvation?"

Bhagavan was silent for a while and then replied. "Your worry is due to thinking. Anxiety is a creation of the mind. Your real nature is peace. Peace has not got to be achieved; it is our nature. To find consolation, you may reflect: 'God gave, God has taken away; He knows best'. But the true remedy is to enquire into your true nature. It is because you feel that your son does not exist that you feel grief. If you knew that he existed you would not feel grief. That means that the source of the grief is mental and not an actual reality. There is a story given in some books how two boys went on a pilgrimage and after some days news came back that one of them was dead. However, the wrong one was reported dead, and the result was that the mother who had lost her son went about as cheerful as ever, while the one who had still got her son was weeping and lamenting. So it is not any object or condition that causes grief but only our thought about it. Your son came from the Self and

was absorbed back into the Self. Before he was born, where was he apart from the Self? He is our Self in reality. In deep sleep the thought of 'I' or 'child' or 'death' does not occur to you, and you are the same person who existed in sleep. If you enquire in this way and find out your real nature, you will know your son's real nature also. He always exists. It is only you who think he is lost. You create a son in your mind, and think that he is lost, but in the Self he always exists."

K.M. Jivrajani: What is the nature of life after physical death?

Bhagavan: Find out about your present life. Why do you worry about life after death? If you realize the present you will know everything.

In the afternoon, Bhagavan saw a relative of his, a young man called Sesha Aiyar, in the hall. He said: "Seeing you reminds me of something that happened in Dindigul when I was a boy. Your uncle Periappa Seshaiyar was living there then. There was some function in the house and all went to it and then in the night went to the temple. I was left alone in the house. I was sitting reading in the front room, but after a while I locked the front door and fastened the windows and went to sleep. When they returned from the temple no amount of shouting or banging at the door or window could wake me. At last they managed to open the door with a key from the opposite house and then they tried to wake me up by beating me. All the boys beat me to their heart's content, and your uncle did too, but without effect. I knew nothing about it till they told me next morning."

I asked, "How old was Bhagavan then?"

Bhagavan said, "About eleven." Then he continued: "The same sort of thing happened to me in Madurai too. The boys didn't dare touch me when I was awake, but if they had any grudge against me they would come when I was asleep and carry me wherever they liked and beat me as much as they

liked and then put me back to bed, and I would know nothing about it until they told me in the morning."

I said, "It would seem that even in those days Bhagavan's sleep was not ordinary sleep but some state like *samadhi*."

Bhagavan: I don't know what state it was, but that is the fact. Some who have written about my life have called it somnambulism.

I: It was certainly not somnambulism; that is walking in one's sleep. This was more like *samadhi* or absorption in the Self.

In the evening Bose asked, "Is it good to do *japa* and *puja* and so on when we know that enquiry into the Self is the real thing?"

Bhagavan: All are good. They will lead to this eventually. *Japa* is our real nature. When we realize the Self then *japa* goes on without effort. What is the means at one stage becomes the goal at another. When effortless, constant *japa* goes on, it is realisation.

Bose: Why did Bhagavan regard Arunachala as Father?

Bhagavan did not reply but sat smiling.

Bose: Perhaps for the benefit of others?

Bhagavan: Yes; so long as there is the feeling 'I', it must have a source from whence it came.

1-6-46

When Bhagavan returned from his morning walk at about 7-45, the attendant Sivananda offered to massage his legs. Bhagavan forbade him and said: "If I let them they go on massaging for a long time. This morning too, at *parayana*, I did not let them. They begin with the *parayana* and don't stop till it is finished, and sometimes I am unaware of it."

G.V. Subbaramayya: Bhagavan once told me that Bhagavan is aware of the beginning of *parayana* and knows nothing more till the end of it.

Bhagavan: Yes, it often happens that I hear the beginning and then the end and have been absorbed so that I have lost count of time in between, and then I have wondered whether they had left out whole passages to get to the end so soon.

After a moment, Bhagavan continued: "Similarly, those people go on massaging and I am sometimes not at all aware that I am being massaged. So now I am not going to let them. I will do it myself." So saying, Bhagavan took the liniment and rubbed it over his knees.

In the afternoon Bhagavan explained in answer to Mr. H.C. Khanna of Kanpur:

Why should your occupation or duties in life interfere with your spiritual effort? For instance, there is a difference between your activities at home and in the office. In your office activities you are detached and so long as you do your duty you do not care what happens or whether it results in gain or loss to the employer. But your duties at home are performed with attachment and you are all the time anxious as to whether they will bring advantage or disadvantage to you and your family. But it is possible to perform all the activities of life with detachment and regard only the Self as real. It is wrong to suppose that if one is fixed in the Self one's duties in life will not be properly performed. It is like an actor. He dresses and acts and even feels the part he is playing, but he knows really that he is not that character but someone else in real life. In the same way, why should the body-consciousness or the feeling 'I-am-the-body' disturb you, once you know for certain that you are not the body but the Self? Nothing that the body does should shake you from abidance in the Self. Such abidance will never interfere with

the proper and effective discharge of whatever duties the body has, any more than the actor's being aware of his real status in life interferes with his acting a part on the stage.

You ask whether you can tell yourself: "I am not the body but the Self". Of course, whenever you feel tempted to identify yourself with the body (as you may often have to, owing to old *vasanas*) it may be a help to remind yourself that you are not the body but the Self. But you should not make such repetition a *mantram*, constantly saying: "I am not the body but the Self". By proper enquiry into the Self, the notion 'I am this body' will gradually vanish and in time the faith that you are the Self will become unshakeable.

K.M. Jivrajani: In the early stages would it not be a help to man to seek solitude and give up his outer duties in life?

Bhagavan: Renunciation is always in the mind, not in going to forests or solitary places or giving up one's duties. The main thing is to see that the mind does not turn outward but inward. It does not really rest with a man whether he goes to this place or that or whether he gives up his duties or not. All that happens according to destiny. All the activities that the body is to go through are determined when it first comes into existence. It does not rest with you to accept or reject them. The only freedom you have is to turn your mind inward and renounce activities there.

K.M. Jivrajani: But is it not possible for something to be a help, especially to a beginner? Like a fence round a young tree. For instance, don't our books say that it is helpful to go on pilgrimage to sacred shrines or to get *sat sang.*

Bhagavan: Who said they are not helpful? Only such things do not rest with you, as turning your mind inward does. Many people desire the pilgrimage or *sat sang* that you mention, but do they all get it?

K.M. Jivrajani: Why is it that turning inward alone is left to us and not any outer things?

I answered: Nobody can answer that. That is the Divine scheme.

Bhagavan: If you want to go to fundamentals, you must enquire who you are and find out who it is who has freedom or destiny. Who are you and why did you get this body that has these limitations?

3-6-46

G.V. Subbaramayya: Did Subramania Bharati ever come to Bhagavan?

Bhagavan: I think he did once. It was when we were on the hill. One evening when only Sivayya (the late Mauni Swami of Kutralam), who is dead now, was with me, someone came and sat for nearly an hour before me and then went away without saying a word. Later, when I saw pictures of Bharati I thought it must have been he.

G.V. Subbaramayya: Was it Sivayya who beat a monkey and the monkey was so grieved that it went and drowned itself?

Bhagavan: No, it was someone else. And the monkey was not even beaten, it was only scolded. Even that was more than it could stand and it went and drowned itself very soon after. It was a dog that was beaten. He was a very strange dog. All day he would lie quiet in a place among the rocks, higher up than our Asramam, and where it was not easy to see him, and he would only go out at night. Seeing something black going out and coming back at night, we looked during the day time and found that it was a dog. He continued in this way for many days, so we took pity on him and began giving him food. But even then he would not come near us. We used to put some food a little distance away from us and he would come and eat it and then go away. If

we went near he would run away. And then one day, when a number of us had been out and were returning, this dog ran up to us, and he came straight to me out of all the crowd and jumped up on me and tried to make friends with me. After that he stayed with us and he would go and lie in the lap of any devotee. Some of the orthodox ones didn't like it, and one day Iswara Swami beat him for interfering when a devotee was doing *puja*. This was more than the dog could stand and he immediately disappeared. We don't know what happened to him. We searched for him but could never find out.

After this, the talk turned to some of the famous or notable persons who had visited Bhagavan. Speaking of the late Maharaja of Mysore, Bhagavan said: "He came and stayed quietly and then went away."

Some of us asked whether he did not ask any questions, and Bhagavan said, "No, no, nothing of that sort."

I said, "I have heard that he asked for Bhagavan's blessing to be able to rule his subjects to their best advantage, or something like that."

Bhagavan: Yes, he asked for blessing on his work. He said, "I can't serve you, as those here are privileged to, but still I crave your grace," or something like that. Apart from that he did not discuss anything with me.

Somebody wanted to know what happened when Rajendra Prasad was here.

Bhagavan: He also was quiet all the days he was here.

K.S. Seshagiri Aiyar: I was here at the time. Bajaj did all the talking. He talked for Rajendra also. I remember him saying: "Rajendra gave up a very lucrative practice to work for his country; why should such a man be plagued with a distressing complaint like asthma?" And Bhagavan was silent for a while and then replied: "This body itself is a disease, so that is a disease of a disease."

Bhagavan: When Satyamurti came he also was silent and never spoke at all. When Srinivasa Sastri came he asked me some questions but when I put him counter-questions he would not answer them. He wanted to go his own way. I wanted to take him inward but he wouldn't, and he wanted to pull me outward.

In the afternoon K.S.S. (Ramanadasa) narrated the following incident:

When Bhagavan was living at Skandasramam I was once alone with him, sitting on the steps leading up to the Asramam when a man came to the gate with his family and stopped there and called out to me. When I went there he asked me to go and ask the Swami whether they could approach him and receive his *darshan*. I was surprised and said, "Why do you ask permission?" And he said, "We are untouchables."

I started to go back to Bhagavan, but then it occurred to me that even to ask Bhagavan would be an injustice to him, so I told the man that caste had no meaning with Bhagavan and that they would be welcome. The whole party came and prostrated before Bhagavan, and I well remember how for about ten minutes his gracious look dwelt on that untouchable and his family; and how many rich and notable people have I seen fall at his feet without being vouchsafed such grace.

* * * *

Bhagavan was going through the latest edition of *Ramana Lila* and pointing out to G.V.S. some errors that had crept into it, and in the course of the talk he referred to one Kathirvelu who was his class-mate at Tiruchuzhi and in whose notebook he had, at Kathirvelu's request, written down his name, class and school in English and added 'Madras Presidency' in Tamil and had also numbered the pages in his own hand. The classmate never came here, but after his death his son sent the notebook together with another one in which Kathirvelu had written various things, including essays on

religious subjects. Bhagavan wanted to show us the notebooks, especially the one in which he had written a few lines, but we couldn't find it, so Bhagavan himself got up from his couch and came to the shelf and picked it out for us. The Tamil handwriting even then was like print, and so was the numbering of the pages.

6-6-46

In the afternoon G.V.S. asked, "What is the difference between *manasa japa* and *dhyana*?"

Bhagavan: They are the same. In both, the mind is concentrated on one thing, the *mantra* or the Self. *Mantra, japa, dhyana* — are only different names. So long as they require effort we call them by these names, but when the Self is realized this goes on without any effort and what was the means becomes the goal.

8-6-46

T.P.R., G.V.S. and some others went in a party today to Gurumoortham, the mango orchard nearby, Ayyankulam, Arunagirinatha Temple, the Pathalalingam Temple, the Vahana Mantap, the *iluppai* tree within the Big Temple — all the places where Bhagavan stayed in his early days. When they got back in the evening Bhagavan asked them about their expedition and they said it was very enjoyable and that at Ayyankulam and on the way back from there they sang in ecstasy, Viswamoorthi taking the lead in singing and in rousing them to ecstasy.

Bhagavan said that the marks left on the wall at Gurumoortham by his leaning against it and also the first writing in charcoal for Nayanar could still be discerned if the whitewash were scraped off. They said that the whole place was now filled with bundles of tobacco so that they could not even see the corner where Bhagavan used to sit.

9-6-46

In the afternoon T.P. Ramachandra Aiyar made Viswamoorthi sing two of the songs he had sung at Gurumoortham the previous day. After that Viswamoorthi sang his Kannada life of Bhagavan in which each line ends with 'Sri Ramana', and T.P.R. and I joined in the 'Sri Ramana' as a chorus. T.P.R. then told Bhagavan that the previous day Venkatesa Sastri had roused them to sing this song with fervour, and they not only sang but danced and went into ecstasy. Bhagavan said, "Is that so? They did not tell me that yesterday: I thought you simply sang."

10-6-46

Dr. Haridas, a disciple of Swami Madhava Theertha and a relative of Mahatma Gandhi by marriage, asked Bhagavan, "If *ajnana* is also Brahman, why is Brahman not visible but only *ajnana* or the world?"

Bhagavan: Brahman is not to be seen or known. It is beyond the *triputis* (triads) of seer, seen and seeing or knower, knowledge and knowing. The Reality remains ever as it is; that there is *ajnana* or the world is due to our *moham* or illusion. Neither knowledge nor ignorance is real; what is beyond this, as all other pairs of opposites, is the Reality. It is neither light nor darkness but beyond both, though we sometimes have to speak of it as light and of ignorance as its shadow.

G.V.S.: It is said that the Self cannot be realized by reading books but only by *anubhava* (personal experience).

Bhagavan: What is *anubhava*? It is only going beyond the pairs of opposites or the *triputis*.

In the evening Bhagavan said with reference to a question somebody had asked: "During sleep there is both the Self and *ajnana* — *ajnana* because we knew nothing and the Self

because we existed, and when we wake we say, 'I slept well', although we knew nothing. If one asks how the Self and *ajnana* can exist together, any more than light and darkness, the answer is that to one who realises, the Self is all light and there is no such thing as darkness at all, but to one who has not realised we say that there can be *ajnana* in the Self like the seeming shadows on the moon."

13-6-46

Visitor: I do *japa* with an image of Lord Subrahmanya with Valli and Daivayanai on either side, but as soon as I close my eyes the image of Subrahmanya as the Palani Andavar, that is as a beggar with a staff, appears before my mind's eye. I don't know what that means. Should I change the image I have before me for *japa*?

Bhagavan did not reply.

I said to Bhagavan: It is strange that when a man does *japa* before an image another image though of the same God should appear before his mind's eye.

Then the visitor added: There is one more thing I must add. I used to do *japa* before a Palani Andavar image; but my mother said that such an image is not auspicious in a household and that I should change it for one of Lord Subrahmanya with Valli and Daivayanai.

I said: Now it is understandable. That is probably the explanation.

But still Bhagavan made no reply.

An ascetic claiming to be a native of Bagdad, naked, keeping silent and holding his right arm permanently aloft in the air, has been staying in Palakothu since the 11th. He claims to have been with Sai Baba for 25 years. If this is true he must be at least 65 now, though he looks only 30 or 35. He met Bhagavan this morning when Bhagavan was returning from

his morning walk and asked for Bhagavan's blessing. I went to see him out of curiosity. He sent the following question to Bhagavan through Ramasubba Aiyar: "What is my future?"

First Bhagavan said, "Why does he bother about the future and not the present?" Later he added: "Tell him his future will be as his present is."

I told Bhagavan that I was not impressed with him. When I told Bhagavan that his finger nails were five or six inches long, Bhagavan said, "That means nothing. When I was at Gurumoortham I found that in less than a year the nails grow an inch long. Matted locks also grow very long in a few years. Ordinary hair does not grow so long. I remember when Udhandi Nayanar had matted hair only five or six inches long and twenty-five years later it was fifteen feet long. So however long and imposing nails and matted hair may be they are no sign of great age."

I recalled how Bhagavan had once told us that in those early days people used to look at his nails and say: "He is ever so old; he has been like this for years." And Bhagavan said, "Yes, yes."

15-6-46

When I entered the hall in the evening Bhagavan was saying, "Everything we see is changing, always changing. There must be something unchanging as the basis and source of all this."

G.V.S.: What justification have we for imagining that the source of all this must be unchanging?

Bhagavan: It is not mere thinking or imagining that the 'I' is unchanging. It is a fact of which everyone is aware. The 'I' exists in sleep when all the changing things do not exist. It exists in dream and in waking. The 'I' remains changeless in all these states while other things come and go.

Dr. S. Mani, Assistant Director of Public Health at Madras, a frequent visitor, asked Bhagavan "But why should these things, that is the world, appear?"

Bhagavan: To whom does it appear? You see and so the world exists. Does it exist independently of the seer? Does it come and tell you, "I exist"? What proof is there of its existence except that you say you see or perceive it?

Another visitor said to Bhagavan: I want to have *darshan* of God. What should I do?

Bhagavan: First we must know what you mean by 'I' and 'God' and by '*darshan* of God'.

The visitor dropped the matter and said no more.

16-6-46

G.V.S.: Is it stated in any book that for ultimate and final Self-realization one must ultimately come to the Heart even after reaching *sahasrara,* and that the Heart is at the right side?

Bhagavan: No. I have not come across this in any book. But in a Malayalam book on medicine I came across a stanza locating the heart on the right side and I have translated it into Tamil in the *Supplement to the Forty Verses*.

We know nothing about the other centres. We cannot be sure what we arrive at in concentrating on them and realizing them. But as the 'I' arises from the Heart it must sink back and merge there for Self-realization.

Later in the day G.V.S. said, "It is said that by repeating his own name a number of times Tennyson used to get into a state in which the world completely disappeared and he realised that it was all illusion." And a discussion ensued as to where the quotation came from and whether we could find it.

17-6-46

When Bhagavan returned from his morning walk on the Hill, a Bangalore photographer took a photograph of him in *Padmasanam* posture for inclusion in the *Golden Jubilee Souvenir* that is to be brought out in September.

Sri Gunaji, a retired advocate who is now a naturopath at Belgaum, has been here for some days, massaging Bhagavan's legs for rheumatism, and today he sang a song he had composed in Hindi. He gave its meaning in English as: "I ask nothing of Thee, Lord; but if Thou art disposed to grant me any favour, then take away this ego-sense, kill all my thoughts, destroy the world and let my mind be dissolved in the ocean of Self."

Bhagavan said, laughing, "You are not asking me to give but to take." And then he added, "There is nothing to give. If all this goes, that is the ego and the world created by it, the Reality remains. That is all. Nothing new is brought in. If the false goes the true remains."

In continuation of yesterday's conversation about Tennyson, the relevant passage was found in a footnote to the English translation of *Upadesa Saram*. It was not in a poem but in a letter to B.P. Blood. Bhagavan asked me to read it out, so I did: ". . . .a kind of waking trance I have frequently had, quite up from boyhood, when I have been all alone. This has generally come upon me through repeating my own name two or three times to myself, silently, till all at once, as it were out of the intensity of consciousness of individuality, the individuality itself seemed to dissolve and fade away into boundless being: and this not a confused state but the clearest of the clearest, the surest of the surest, the weirdest of the weirdest, utterly beyond words, where death was an almost laughable impossibility, the loss of personality (if so it were) seeming no extinction but the only true life."

Bhagavan said, "That state is called abidance in the Self. It is described in a number of songs."

He took up *Thayumanavar* and it opened at the very page where was the poem he was looking for. He read out the poem, '*கூடுதலுடன் பிறிதலற்று*' which is the 8th stanza in '*சின் மயானந்த குருவே*'. Bhagavan also quoted the 2nd stanza in '*ஆசையெனும்*' the 5th in '*பரிபூரணானந்தம்*' of Thayumanavar which all refer to this '*நிலை*' of '*சகஜநிஷ்டை*' (state of *sahaja nishta).*

18-6-46

G.V.S. translated the *Pancharatna* (the last of the *Five Hymns*) of Bhagavan in English verse and showed it to Bhagavan. Bhagavan said, "The third stanza deals with the *sat* aspect, the fourth with the *chit* and the fifth with the *ananda*. The *jnani* becomes one with the *sat* or Reality, like the river merging in the ocean; the yogi sees the light of *chit;* the *bhakta* or *karma-yogin* is immersed in the ocean of *ananda*."

19-6-46

G.V.S. slightly altered his translation of the *Pancharatna* and showed it to Bhagavan. In the talk that followed, Bhagavan said, "This is how the *Pancharatna* was composed: I had somehow composed the first stanza in a slightly different form, when Ganapati Sastri saw it and altered it a little and said it had become, *Arya Geetha* and asked me to write four more similar stanzas saying that he would use them as *mangalam* for his works. That was in 1917. Later, in 1922, Aiyasami Pillai was getting up an edition of the first four songs of the present *Arunachala Stuti Panchakam* and I was asked to translate the *Pancharatna* also into Tamil to go with them, and I did."

A newcomer called Gajendra Mehta asked Bhagavan about the state of the soul after death. He has just returned from Africa. He has been writing to Bhagavan for four years but this is the first time he has come here.

Bhagavan: If you know the present you will know the future. It is strange that people don't want to know about the present, about whose existence nobody can have any doubt, but are always eager to know about the past or the future, both of which are unknown. What is birth and what is death? And who has birth or death? Why go to birth and death to understand what you daily experience in sleeping and waking? When you sleep, this body and the world do not exist for you, and these questions do not worry you, and yet you exist, the same you that exists now while waking. It is only when you wake up that you have a body and see the world. If you understand waking and sleep properly you will understand life and death. Only waking and sleeping happen daily, so people don't notice the wonder of it but only want to know about birth and death.

G. Mehta: Is there a rebirth?

Bhagavan: If there is birth there must be not only one rebirth but a whole succession of births. Why and how did you get this birth? For the same reason and in the same manner you must have succeeding births. But if you ask who has the birth and whether birth and death are for you or for somebody distinct from you, then you realize the truth and the truth burns up all karma and frees you from all births. The books graphically describe how all *sanchita karma,* which would take countless lives to exhaust, is burnt up by one little spark of *jnana,* just as a mountain of gunpowder will be blown up by a single spark of fire. It is the ego that is the cause of all the world and of the countless sciences whose researches are so great as to baffle description, and if the ego is dissolved by enquiry all this immediately crumbles and the Reality or Self alone remains.

G. Mehta had also asked a personal question: Whether he should remain abroad or return to India, but to that Bhagavan said: "Don't worry what you should do. Things will happen as they are destined to happen."

In the evening the Senior Maharani of Baroda arrived to stay for a few days with Mrs. Taleyarkhan.

20-6-46

G. Mehta: If I am not the body am I responsible for the consequences of my good and bad actions?

Bhagavan: If you are not the body and do not have the idea 'I-am-the-doer' the consequences of your good or bad actions will not affect you. Why do you say about the actions the body performs "I do this" or "I did that"? As long as you identify yourself with the body like that you are affected by the consequences of the actions and you have merit and demerit.

G. Mehta: Then I am not responsible for the consequences of good or bad actions?

Bhagavan: If you are not, why do you bother about the question?

G. Mehta: Then does that mean that if one has not the sense of 'I do this' or 'I am the doer' one need not do anything at all?

Bhagavan: The question of doing only arises if you are the body.

This Mehta tells me that he has been in Africa for the past 20 years, visiting India from time to time. He comes from Ahmedabad. For the last six years he has not been able to come owing to the war. Early this year he received a letter from the Asramam that he would be able to come this year and it turned out so in spite of great difficulties.

Sri Krishniah Chowdhuri arrived today. Bhagavan told me: "It seems he is writing my life in Telugu and has finished two chapters. He said he would read them to me this afternoon."

He came at three and read till about a quarter past four and then said he would finish tomorrow. It was written in the

life that Bhagavan went to Tiruchuzhi on receiving news of his father's death, but Bhagavan said that in fact he went there four or five days before his father's death. He got news that his father was dangerously ill and went to Tiruchuzhi at once and his father died only four or five days later. The error arose as this was not clear in the Telugu *Ramana Lila* on which Chowdhuri was basing his life.

24-6-46

Lokamma sang Muruganar's benediction from *Sarana Pallandu*; when she finished Bhagavan said, "The last song she sang can be translated for them," meaning the Maharani of Baroda and Mrs. Taleyarkhan. I accordingly gave the meaning of it: "May all those devotees with great love also live long, who, coming to Ramana, get their desires fulfilled and, planting his feet in their heart, set all their troubles at rest and attain peace."

Explaining why he wanted me to translate it, Bhagavan said, "Yesterday Mrs. Taleyarkhan asked me to have the best poem about me by Muruganar read out in the hall and translated for her and the Maharani. Sundaresa Aiyar suggested the benediction in Tamil, but I thought that '*வண்டுவிடுதூது**' and the reply of the bee in particular would be more appropriate, so we read them out and translated them. And now Lokamma sang the benediction, and when she sang the last stanza it occurred to me that they would like to hear it and it might be a consolation to them."

Just then Muruganar walked in after an absence of two or three months and prostrated himself to Bhagavan. Bhagavan remarked: "We were talking about him and his '*Benediction*' and here he comes."

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* A song in which the bee is sent as a messenger.

I asked him which of the poems in his *Ramana Sannidhi Murai* he liked best, but he could not say. I told him that I liked *Arunai Ramanesan* best and proceeded to sing '*தஞ்சமெனத் தாள் சேர்ந்தார்*' from it, and Bhagavan asked me to translate that also for the Maharani, so I did. The gist of it is that Ramana bears upon his head, because it is his fate, the burdens of all those who throw themselves at his feet and regard him as their sole refuge, that peace comes naturally to all those who live with him, that whatever dangers may threaten his devotees they need have no fear, and that Bhagavan had saved him, Muruganar, bidding him not to fear.

In the afternoon, when Muruganar came into the hall, Bhagavan explained to him why the last song in *The Benediction* was translated and also added, "When I was coming back from my walk the Maharani met me and requested, 'When next I come here I should like to come with my husband to your feet.' He is now in England and they had news that he is not well, so I thought it would be comforting to them to hear that last stanza in the *Benediction* translated." Muruganar did not remember it, so Bhagavan took out the book and read it to him.

In the evening Mrs. Taleyarkhan told Bhagavan, "When the Maharani left she was very sorry to have to go. She told me that the five days she spent here have been the happiest days in her life."

26-6-46

T.P.R. told Bhagavan that he took only *kanji* (gruel) for lunch, as he had dysentery. Bhagavan spoke highly of the efficacy of a gruel made of rice, dried ginger, coriander and rock salt *(induppu)* and added: "It seems they are going to give us all *kanji* (gruel) tomorrow morning. I am told Sama Thatha is going to prepare it. Somebody must have asked him to. People do not realize how wholesome *kanji* is and how tasty." Bhagavan was

then reminded of old Keerai Patti, who used to gather all kinds of green vegetables and cook them somehow, although she was half-blind. It seems Bhagavan would thoroughly enjoy it. "In those days we would make *kanji* (gruel) and one *aviyal* with all the vegetables we had on hand. None of the fine dishes they make here now can equal the simple fare we enjoyed then. People do not realize the enjoyment of such a meal." Bhagavan went on to say, "People don't know how a poor man appreciates his food, simple though it often is. He comes home terribly hungry after a day's hard work in the field or elsewhere, and then when he sits down for his meal, down goes one huge fistful after another until it looks as though he would swallow the plate as well. Your rich man sits down to a meal with all sorts of delicacies served on fine plates before him and nibbles or sips at one thing after another but relishes nothing and has no sort of satisfaction from all the luxury spread before him. Even after we came down here we still used to make *kanji*. At first there were a lot of men working on the premises, clearing it of cactus and levelling it, and we used to prepare a midday meal for them in addition to their wages. For them and us together we used to prepare only two dishes; a huge pot of *kanji* and another of all the vegetables we happened to have on hand. You can imagine the quantity when I tell you that the ladle we stirred it with was the branch of a tree. In those days I used to do all the grinding for the cooking. Once I made *uppuma* out of '*கீரைத்தண்டு*' (*keeraithandu).* Somebody had brought a whole sack of '*கீரைத்தண்டு*' and we cut the whole lot up into small bits. There were seven or eight measures of it. I added one measure of '*ரவை*' (*ravai*) to it and boiled the whole lot well and made *uppuma* out of it. Everyone enjoyed it as *uppuma* made of *ravai,* but when I told them how it was really made, they were not so pleased. People always like something expensive."

When the Mauni brought the mail today he was limping with a pain in his right thigh. Bhagavan advised him to rub some liniment on it and told the attendant to give him some.

Bhagavan's small bottle for constant use was empty, so Bhagavan told the attendant to take the big bottle from the cupboard. Bhagavan told Vaikunta Vasar to take a small bottle of it to Mauni and see that he used it. When the large bottle was taken out of the cupboard Bhagavan noticed that it was not full, so he turned to Khanna, who had bought it for him, and said: "It looks as though you bought this for yourself or your children and then gave it to me when you saw what a state I am in. And perhaps the *Chavanaprash* you gave me was also bought for you or your children."

Khanna assured Bhagavan that the liniment was not needed for himself or his family but had been bought specially for Bhagavan, and he explained that the reason why the bottle was not full was that he had bought it in several smaller bottles and transferred it to this large one.

A little later he handed Bhagavan a piece of paper on which he had written something. After reading it, Bhagavan said: "It is a complaint. He says: 'I have been coming to you and this time I have remained nearly a month at your feet and I find no improvement at all in my condition. My *vasanas* are as strong as ever. When I go back my friends will laugh at me and ask what good my stay here has done me'."

Then, turning to Khanna, Bhagavan said, "Why distress your mind by thinking that *jnana* has not come or that the *vasanas* have not disappeared? Don't give room for thoughts. In the last stanza of *Sukavari* by Thayumanavar, the Saint says much the same as is written on this paper." And Bhagavan made me read the stanza and translate it into English for the benefit of those who do not know Tamil. It goes: "The mind mocks me and though I tell you ten thousand times you are indifferent, so how am I to attain peace and bliss?"

Then I said to Khanna, "You are not the only one who complains to Bhagavan like this. I have more than once

complained in the same way, and I still do, for I find no improvement in myself."

Khanna replied, "It is not only that I find no improvement but I think I have grown worse. The *vasanas* are stronger now. I can't understand it."

Bhagavan again quoted the last three stanzas of *Mandalathin* of Thayumanavar, where the mind is coaxed as the most generous and disinterested of givers, to go back to its birthplace or source and thus give the devotee peace and bliss, and he asked me to read out a translation of it that I once made.

Khanna then asked, "The illumination plus mind is *jivatma* and the illumination alone is *paramatma*; is that right?"

Bhagavan assented and then pointed to his towel and said, "We call this a white cloth, but the cloth and its whiteness cannot be separated, and it is the same with the illumination and the mind that unite to form the ego." Then he added: "The following illustration that is often given in books will also help you. The lamp in the theatre is the *Parabrahman* or the illumination, as you put it. It illumines itself and the stage and actors. We see the stage and the actors by its light, but its light still continues when there is no more play. Another illustration is an iron rod that is compared to the mind. Fire joins it and it becomes red-hot. It glows and can burn things, like fire, but still it has a definite shape, unlike fire. If we hammer it, it is the rod that receives the blows, not the fire. The rod is the *jivatma* and the fire the Self or *Paramatma*."

27-6-46

In the afternoon, T.V.K. Aiyar, who had with him our library copy of *Tiruvoimozhi* with commentary, asked Bhagavan whether we had any better commentary than that. Bhagavan replied that we had not and added, "All sorts of

learned commentaries are written on the *Nalayira Prabandam* in the conventional *Vaishnavite* language, twisting the texts that are clearly *Advaitic* into some laboured *Dvaitic* meaning. In the old days some *Vaishnavites* used to come to me, and when they were wearing the 'U' mark they would put it on me also, and when they were wearing the 'Y' mark they would put that on me, and then they would prostrate themselves before me. I used to let them do what they liked with me."

T.V.K. then told Bhagavan, "Recently a man of the *thengalai* school who is well versed in the esoteric meaning of *Vaishnavite* literature initiated me and gave me *samasanam* and *sama asrayam* and taught me their esoteric meaning. He gives discourses and does good work among the poor, but he would not admit *vadakalais* to his discourses; according to the *Vaishnavite* teaching one must do *kainkaryam* or service to God."

Bhagavan replied rather sarcastically: "So God can't get on without their services? On the contrary, God asks: 'Who are you to do service to Me?' He is always saying: 'I am within you; who are you?' One must try to realize that and not speak of service. Submission or surrender is the basic teaching of *Vaishnavism*, but it does not consist in paying a Guru a fee for initiation and telling him that you have surrendered. As often as one tries to surrender, the ego raises its head and one has to try to suppress it. Surrender is not an easy thing. Killing the ego is not an easy thing. It is only when God Himself by His grace draws the mind inwards that complete surrender can be achieved. But such grace comes only to those who have already, in this or previous lives, gone through all the struggles and *sadhanas* preparatory to the extinction of the mind and killing of the ego."

Bhagavan added, "In the old days these *Vaishnavites* used to come and advise me to undergo a *samasanam* but I used to keep silent."

Bhagavan continued to speak of the *Dvaitism* of the *Vaishnavites* and quoted the Nammalvar song beginning '*யானே என்னை அறியகிலாதே*' the gist of which is: "not knowing myself, I went about saying 'I' and 'mine'. Then I discovered that 'I' was 'You' and 'mine' was 'Yours', oh God." He said: "This is clear *Advaita,* but these *Vaishnavites* would give it some interpretation to make it accord with their feeling of duality. They hold that they must exist and God must exist, but how is that possible? It seems that they must all remain for ever doing service in *Vaikunta*, but how many of them are to do service and where would there be room for all these *Vaishnavites*?"

Bhagavan said this laughing, and then, after a pause, he added, "On the other hand, *Advaita* does not mean that a man must always sit in *samadhi* and never engage in action. Many things are necessary to keep up the life of the body, and action can never be avoided. Nor is *bhakti* ruled out in *Advaita*. Shankara is rightly regarded as the foremost exponent of *Advaita,* and yet look at the number of shrines he visited (action), and the devotional songs he wrote."

Bhagavan then gave further quotations from the eighth decad of *Tiruvoimozhi* to show that some of *Vaishnavite* Alwars had clearly endorsed *Advaita.* He particularly emphasised the third stanza where it says: "I was lost in Him or in That" and the fifth, which is very like the *Thiruvachagam* stanza that says the ego got attenuated more and more and was extinguished in the Self.

Later a visitor asked whether Bhagavan had ever thought of making a tour all round India or would consider such a proposal.

Bhagavan: I have never had any such idea, though several devotees have proposed it. Rajeswarananda once said he would arrange for a special train to take me all over India. But what is the use of my going anywhere? I am not able to see anything.

(I took this to refer to Bhagavan's seeing only the Self in everything). They say I must go and give *darshan* to all the people in those parts who may not be able to come here, but even if I went, who would take any notice of a beggar going about clad only in a loin-cloth? Or should I go with a label on my forehead or a card hung round my neck saying: 'Here goes a Maharshi'? Or I should have to take a big retinue who would go about proclaiming: 'Here comes our great Ramana Maharshi'. Besides, out of all the millions of people, to how many should I be able to give *darshan*?

Again at about seven o'clock in the evening, when I went into the hall, Bhagavan returned to the subject, saying: "People come here to give *darshan* to me, so why should I go to give *darshan* to them? If I yielded to the importunity of some devotee and went to some place when he asked me I should have to go to every place that every other devotee asked me to and there would be no end to my trouble."

28-6-46

In the afternoon Khanna's wife appealed to Bhagavan in writing: "I am not learned in the scriptures and I find the method of Self-enquiry too hard for me. I am a woman with seven children and a lot of household cares, and it leaves me little time for meditation. I request Bhagavan to give me some simpler and easier method."

Bhagavan: No learning or knowledge of scriptures is necessary to know the Self, as no man requires a mirror to see himself. All knowledge is required only to be given up eventually as not-Self. Nor is household work or cares with children necessarily an obstacle. If you can do nothing more, at least continue saying 'I, I' to yourself mentally all the time, as advised in *Who am I?*, whatever work you may be doing and whether you are sitting, standing or walking. 'I' is the name of God. It is the first and greatest of all *mantras.* Even OM is second to it.

Khanna: The *jiva* is said to be mind plus illumination. What is it that desires Self-realization and what is it that obstructs our path to Self-realization? It is said that the mind obstructs and the illumination helps.

Bhagavan: Although we describe the *jiva* as mind plus the reflected light of the Self, in actual practice, in life, you cannot separate the two, just as, in the illustrations we used yesterday, you can't separate cloth and whiteness in a white cloth or fire and iron in a red-hot rod. The mind can do nothing by itself. It emerges only with the illumination and can do no action, good or bad, except with the illumination. But while the illumination is always there, enabling the mind to act well or ill, the pleasure or pain resulting from such action is not felt by the illumination, just as when you hammer a red-hot rod it is not the fire but the iron that gets the hammering.

Khanna: Is there destiny? And if what is destined to happen will happen is there any use in prayer or effort or should we just remain idle?

Bhagavan: There are only two ways to conquer destiny or be independent of it. One is to enquire for whom is this destiny and discover that only the ego is bound by destiny and not the Self, and that the ego is non-existent. The other way is to kill the ego by completely surrendering to the Lord, by realizing one's helplessness and saying all the time: 'Not I but Thou, oh Lord!', and giving up all sense of 'I' and 'mine' and leaving it to the Lord to do what he likes with you. Surrender can never be regarded as complete so long as the devotee wants this or that from the Lord. True surrender is love of God for the sake of love and nothing else, not even for the sake of salvation. In other words, complete effacement of the ego is necessary to conquer destiny, whether you achieve this effacement through Self-enquiry or through *bhakti-marga.*

Khanna: Are our prayers granted?

Bhagavan: Yes, they are granted. No thought will go in vain. Every thought will produce its effect some time or other. Thought-force will never go in vain.

2-7-46

This evening after *parayana*, Venkatramaiyar came and told Bhagavan: "It seems that Mrs. Taleyarkhan and her guest, a cousin of Sir Mirza of Mysore, were sitting on the Hill, talking about Bhagavan and the Hill, and Mrs. Taleyarkhan said: 'Bhagavan is a walking God and all our prayers are answered. That is my experience. Bhagavan says this Hill is God Himself. I cannot understand all that, but Bhagavan says so, so I believe it.' Thereupon her friend replied: 'I would take it as a sign, according to our Persian beliefs, if it would rain.' Almost immediately there was a shower and they came to me drenched and told me about it."

3-7-46

A visitor said: I am told that according to your school I must find out the source of my thoughts. How am I to do it?'

Bhagavan: I have no school; however, it is true that one should trace the source of all thoughts.

Visitor: Suppose I have the thought 'horse' and try to trace its source; I find that it is due to memory and the memory in its turn is due to prior perception of the object 'horse', but that is all.

Bhagavan: Who asked you to think about all that? All those are also thoughts. What good will it do you to go on thinking about memory and perception? It will be endless, like the old dispute, which came first, the tree or the seed. Ask who has this perception and memory. That 'I' that has the perception and memory, whence does it arise? Find out that. Because perception or memory or any other experience only comes to that 'I'. You don't have such experiences during sleep, and yet you say that

you existed during sleep. And you exist now too. That shows that the 'I' continues while other things come and go.

Visitor: I am asked to find out the source of 'I', and in fact that is what I want to find out, but how can I? What is the source from which I came?

Bhagavan: You came from the same source in which you were during sleep. Only during sleep you couldn't know where you entered; that is why you must make the enquiry while waking.

Some of us advised the visitor to read *Who am I?* and *Ramana Gita* and Bhagavan also told him he might do so. He did so during the day and in the evening he said to Bhagavan: "Those books prescribe Self-enquiry, but how is one to do it?"

Bhagavan: That also must be described in the books.

Visitor: Am I to concentrate on the thought 'Who am I?'

Bhagavan: It means you must concentrate to see where the I-thought arises. Instead of looking outwards, look inwards and see where the I-thought arises.

Visitor: And Bhagavan says that if I see that, I shall realise the Self?

Bhagavan: There is no such thing as realising the Self. How is one to realise or make real what is real? People all realise, or regard as real, what is unreal, and all they have to do is to give that up. When you do that you will remain as you always are and the Real will be Real. It is only to help people give up regarding the unreal as real that all the religions and the practices taught by them have come into being.

Visitor: Whence comes birth?

Bhagavan: For whom is birth?

Visitor: The *Upanishads* say "He who knows Brahman becomes Brahman."

Bhagavan: It is not a matter of becoming but being.

Visitor: Are the *siddhis* mentioned in Patanjali's *sutras* true or only his dream?

Bhagavan: He who is Brahman or the Self will not value those *siddhis.* Patanjali himself says that they are all exercised with the mind and that they impede Self-realisation.

Visitor: What about the powers of supermen?

Bhagavan: Whether powers are high or low, whether of the mind or super-mind, they exist only with reference to him who has the powers; find out who that is.

Visitor: When one attains Self-realisation, what is the guarantee that one has really attained it and is not under an illusion like the lunatic who thinks he is Napoleon or some such thing?

Bhagavan: In a sense, speaking of Self-realisation is a delusion. It is only because people have been under the delusion that the non-Self is the Self and the unreal the Real that they have to be weaned out of it by the other delusion called Self-realisation; because actually the Self always is the Self and there is no such thing as realising it. Who is to realise what, and how, when all that exists is the Self and nothing but the Self?

Visitor: Sri Aurobindo says the world is real and you and the *Vedantins* say it is unreal. How can the world be unreal?

Bhagavan: The *Vedantins* do not say the world is unreal. That is a misunderstanding. If they did, what would be the meaning of the *Vedantic* text: "All this is Brahman"? They only mean that the world is unreal as world, but it is real as Self. If you regard the world as not-Self it is not real. Everything, whether you call it world or *maya* or *lila* or *sakti*, must be within the Self and not apart from it. There can be no *sakti* apart from the *sakta.*

Visitor: Different teachers have set up different schools and proclaimed different truths and so confused people. Why?

Bhagavan: They have all taught the same truth but from different standpoints. Such differences were necessary to meet the needs of different minds differently constituted, but they all reveal the same Truth.

Visitor: Since they have recommended different paths which is one to follow?

Bhagavan: You speak of paths as if you were somewhere and the Self somewhere else and you had to go and reach it. But in fact the Self is here and now and you are that always. It is like you being here and asking people the way to Ramanasramam and complaining that each one shows a different path and asking which to follow.

Nagamma has been keeping a record of interesting events that she writes to her brother, D.S. Sastri, at Madras in the form of letters. This was placed before Bhagavan and he looked through it and suggested that she should paste a list of contents on the cover. One of the extracts referred to squirrels and this led Bhagavan to start speaking about them.

"There was once a regular war between the people here and the squirrels for a whole month. They used to build their nests over my head. Each day the people would destroy them and the next day the squirrels would have built them again. At last all the holes in the roof were stopped up and the squirrels could do nothing. At one time they used to run all over my couch and get into the sides and under the pillows and everywhere, and I had to look carefully before I sat down or leaned back. It has sometimes happened that I have accidentally leaned heavily on some small squirrel and given it *samadhi* without knowing. The same thing sometimes happened on the Hill too, at Skandasramam. There too the squirrels used to nestle in my mattress and pillows. It began even before that. Even

when I was at Gurumoortham birds and squirrels used to build their nests all round me. There is a bird that builds its nest of mud. Once while I was there such a nest was built and after the birds had left it squirrels occupied it."

12-7-46

On the 8th news had come of the death of Madhava Swami and Bhagavan had spoken a good deal about it. In the evening Kunjuswami left for Kumbakonam, where the death took place, and this morning he returned. He said: "It seems that about 20 days before his death Madhava Swami left Kumbakonam saying he was coming here, but actually he took a ticket to Palni. After staying there he seems to have gone to Palghat and to his home village. Then he went to Trichy and stayed a few days with our Tirumala Chetty and from there returned to Kumbakonam about a week before his death. It seems that the whole of this week he was saying: 'Wherever I go I feel wretched. I don't feel at ease anywhere. If I go to Ramanasramam they may not allow me there, but after having had the privilege of serving Bhagavan for so long I can no longer bear the burden of this body anywhere else. I must throw it off." It seems that this thought was constantly with him and he went about moody and morose. The day before he died he was complaining of indigestion, but for a whole week his digestion had not been good."

Bhagavan asked what gave him indigestion.

Kunju Swami said, "It seems to have been due to eating a mango. They never agreed with him. At about four on Sunday afternoon, the 7th, he was offered some lunch but refused it and asked for a bottle of soda-water. Soon after that he perspired all over and left his body, sitting in the *padmasana* posture."

When the post arrived it brought a letter with news of the death of L. Sarma's first daughter-in-law. This led Bhagavan to speak of death. He said: "The dead are fortunate. It is only those

who are left behind who feel miserable. It is our constant concern to bear the burden of this body and look after its needs. Day in, day out, this is our occupation — bathing, eating, massaging our legs, and so on — no end to it. When we die it takes four persons to carry this body and yet we carry it about constantly without even stopping to think that we are doing so. We can easily lift a heavy stone under water, but as soon as we take it out we find how heavy it is, and in the same way we don't feel the weight of the body as long as a *chaitanya* or life force permeates it.

"Deathlessness is our real nature, and we falsely ascribe it to the body, imagining that it will live for ever and losing sight of what is really immortal, simply because we identify ourselves with the body. It says in the *Upanishads* that the *jnani* looks forward eagerly to the time when he can throw off the body, just as a labourer carrying a heavy load looks forward to reaching his destination and laying it down."

16-7-46

Some of the Khairagarh party came and asked leave of Bhagavan to go to Skandasramam. I told Bhagavan that yesterday Venkatramaiyar and I went with the Rani and Kamakshi and when we were at Virupakshi Cave, Venkatramaiyar told us that if anyone sits there quietly by himself and listens, he hears the sound 'OM'. I asked him whether he had ever heard it and he said that he had not yet had the chance to try. So I now ask Bhagavan whether it is true.

Bhagavan only said: "They say so."

I asked: "But did Bhagavan hear it?" And then I corrected myself and added: "But it is no use asking, because Bhagavan would hear OM or the *Pranava* sound everywhere, and it would not be due to the place if Bhagavan heard it there."

Thereupon Bhagavan said: "Why don't you go and find out for yourself?"

"Yes," I said, "I want to go and see. If a dunce like me has the experience then there can be no doubt that it is due to the influence of the place."

After a while Bhagavan added, "It is generally said that not only is the cave in the shape of OM but the sound OM is heard there. Suddhananda Bharati mentions it in his *Ramana Vijayam*. He ought to know because he lived there." So saying, Bhagavan took the book and showed me the relevant passage in Chapter 24, entitled *Guhan*.

A visitor asked Bhagavan what one should do for the betterment of *atma*.

Bhagavan: What do you mean by *atma* and by betterment?

Visitor: We don't know all that; that is why we come here.

Bhagavan: The Self or *atma* is always as it is. There is no such thing as attaining it. All that is necessary is to give up regarding the not-Self as Self and the unreal as Real. When we give up identifying ourselves with the body the Self alone remains.

Visitor: But how is one to give up this identification? Will coming here and getting our doubts removed help in the process?

Bhagavan: Questions are always about things that you don't know and will be endless unless you find out who the questioner is. Though the things about which the questions are asked are unknown, there can be no doubt that a questioner exists to ask the questions, and if you ask who he is, all doubts will be set at rest.

Visitor: All that I want to know is whether *sat sang* is necessary and whether my coming here will help me or not.

Bhagavan: First you must decide what is *sat sang.* It means association with *sat* or Reality. One who knows or has realized *sat* is also regarded as *sat.* Such association with *sat* or with one who knows *sat* is absolutely necessary for all.

Sankara has said (Bhagavan here quoted the Sanskrit verse) that in all the three worlds there is no boat like *sat sang* t`o carry one safely across the ocean of births and deaths.

17-7-46

This morning Bhagavan was speaking about a letter from Mr. Pande, Principal of a college at Khatmandu, telling about an incident that Mr. Pande has already described in the *Souvenir* volume. A.N. Rao and I wanted to see it, so Bhagavan asked for the letter to be shown to us. This is the incident: Pande went to the great temple in Tiruvannamalai on the evening of his departure. When he entered the innermost shrine the *lingam* of Arunachalam was pointed out to him, and the young man who was with him, also a devotee of Bhagavan, cried out: 'Arunachala! Arunachala!'; but Pande could not see any *lingam* but only the face of Bhagavan whichever side he turned — everywhere the face of Bhagavan!

18-7-46

This morning questions were put by a visitor, by name S.P. Tayal.

S.P. Tayal: I have been doing *sadhana* for nearly 20 years and I can see no progress. What should I do?

Bhagavan: I may be able to say something if I know what the *sadhana* is.

S.P. Tayal: From about 5 o'clock every morning I concentrate on the thought that the Self alone is real and all else unreal. Although I have been doing this for about 20 years I cannot concentrate for more than two or three minutes without my thoughts wandering.

Bhagavan: There is no other way to succeed than to draw the mind back every time it turns outwards and fix it in the Self. There is no need for meditation or *mantra* or *japa* or *dhyana* or

anything of the sort, because these are our real nature. All that is needed is to give up thinking of objects other than the Self. Meditation is not so much thinking of the Self as giving up thinking of the not-Self. When you give up thinking of outward objects and prevent your mind from going outwards and turn it inward and fix it in the Self, the Self alone will remain.

S.P. Tayal: What should I do to overcome the pull of these thoughts and desires? How should I regulate my life so as to attain control over my thoughts?

Bhagavan: The more you get fixed in the Self, the more other thoughts will drop off by themselves. The mind is nothing but a bundle of thoughts, and the I-thought is the root of all of them. When you see who this 'I' is and whence it proceeds all thoughts get merged in the Self.

Regulation of life, such as getting up at a fixed hour, bathing, doing *mantra, japa,* etc., observing ritual, all this is for people who do not feel drawn to Self-enquiry or are not capable of it. But for those who can practise this method all rules and discipline are unnecessary.

At this point K.M. Jivrajani interposed, "Has one necessarily to pass through the stage of seeing occult visions before attaining Self-realization?"

Bhagavan: Why do you bother about visions and whether they come or not?

K.M. Jivrajani: I don't. I only want to know so that I shan't be disappointed if I don't have them.

Bhagavan: Visions are not a necessary stage. To some they come and to others they don't, but whether they come or not you always exist and you must stick to that.

K.M. Jivrajani: I sometimes concentrate on the brain centre and sometimes on the heart — not always on the same centre. Is that wrong?

Bhagavan: Wherever you concentrate and on whatever centre there must be a *you* to concentrate, and that is what you must concentrate on. Different people concentrate on different centres, not only the brain and the heart but also the space between the eyebrows, the tip of the nose, the tip of the tongue, the lowermost *chakra* and even external objects. Such concentration may lead to a sort of *laya* in which you will feel a certain bliss, but care must be taken not to lose the thought 'I Am' in all this. You never cease to exist in all these experiences.

K.M. Jivrajani: That is to say that I must be a witness?

Bhagavan: Talking of the 'witness' should not lead to the idea that there is a witness and something else apart from him that he is witnessing. The 'witness' really means the light that illumines the seer, the seen and the process of seeing. Before, during and after the triads of seer, seen and seeing, the illumination exists. It alone exists always.

K.M. Jivrajani: It is said in books that one should cultivate all the good or *daivic* qualities in order to prepare oneself for Self-realisation.

Bhagavan: All good or *daivic* qualities are included in *jnana* and all bad *asuric* qualities are included in *ajnana.* When *jnana* comes all *ajnana* goes and all *daivic* qualities come automatically. If a man is a *jnani* he cannot utter a lie or do anything wrong. It is, no doubt, said in some books that one should cultivate one quality after another and thus prepare for ultimate *moksha*, but for those who follow the *jnana* or *vichara marga* their *sadhana* is itself quite enough for acquiring all *daivic* qualities; they need not do anything else.

19-7-46

Again today a visitor put questions: I do not understand how to make the enquiry 'Who am I?'

Bhagavan: Find out whence the 'I' arises. Self-enquiry does not mean argument or reasoning such as goes on when you say, "I am not this body, I am not the senses," etc.: all that may also help but it is not the enquiry. Watch and find out where in the body the 'I' arises and fix your mind on that.

Visitor: Will *gayatri* help?

Bhagavan: What is *gayatri*? It really means: "Let me concentrate on that which illumines all." *Dhyana* really means only concentrating or fixing the mind on the object of *dhyana*. But meditation is our real nature. If we give up other thoughts what remains is 'I' and its nature is *dhyana* or meditation or *jnana*, whichever we choose to call it. What is at one time the means later becomes the end; unless meditation or *dhyana* were the nature of the Self it could not take you to the Self. If the means were not of the nature of the goal, it could not bring you to the goal.

20-7-46

In the afternoon Sundaresa Aiyar told Bhagavan that his daughter-in-law (Narayanaswami Aiyar's daughter) had severe labour pains and finally could bear it no longer and cried out: "Ramana! I cannot bear it!"; and immediately the delivery took place. Bhagavan merely said: "Is that so?"

21-7-46

In the afternoon the following two questions were put by Mr. Bhargava, an elderly visitor from Jhansi in U.P.:

(1) How am I to search for the 'I' from start to finish?

(2) When I meditate I reach a stage where there is a vacuum or void. How should I proceed from there?

Bhagavan: Never mind whether there are visions or sounds or anything else or whether there is a void. Are you present

during all this or are you not? You must have been there even during the void to be able to say that you experienced a void. To be fixed in that 'you' is the quest for the 'I' from start to finish. In all books on *Vedanta* you will find this question of a void or of nothing being left, raised by the disciple and answered by the Guru. It is the mind that sees objects and has experiences and that finds a void when it ceases to see and experience, but that is not 'you'. You are the constant illumination that lights up both the experiences and the void. It is like the theatre light that enables you to see the theatre, the actors and the play while the play is going on but also remains alight and enables you to say that there is no play on when it is all finished. Or there is another illustration. We see objects all around us, but in complete darkness we do not see them and we say, 'I see nothing'; even then the eyes are there to say that they see nothing. In the same way, you are there even in the void you mention.

You are the witness of the three bodies: the gross, the subtle and the causal, and of the three states: waking, dream and deep sleep, and of the three times: past, present and future, and also of this void. In the story of the tenth man, when each of the ten counted and thought there were only nine, each one forgetting to count himself, there is a stage when they think one is missing and don't know who it is; and that corresponds to the void. We are so accustomed to the notion that all that we see around us is permanent and that we are this body, that when all this ceases to exist we imagine and fear that we also have ceased to exist.

Bhagavan also quoted verses 212 and 213 from *Vivekachudamani*, in which the disciple says: "After I eliminate the five sheaths as not-Self, I find that nothing at all remains," and the Guru replied that the Self or That by which all modifications (including the ego and its creatures) and their absence (that is the void) are perceived is always there.

Then Bhagavan continued speaking on the subject and said: "The nature of the Self or 'I' must be illumination. You perceive all modifications and their absence. How? To say that you get the illumination from another would raise the question how he got it and there would be no end to the chain of reasoning. So you yourself are the illumination. The usual illustration of this is the following: You make all kinds of sweets of various ingredients and in various shapes and they all taste sweet because there is sugar in all of them and sweetness is the nature of sugar. And in the same way all experiences and the absence of them contain the illumination which is the nature of the Self. Without the Self they cannot be experienced, just as without sugar not one of the articles you make can taste sweet."

A little later Bhagavan also said: "First one sees the Self as objects, then one sees the Self as void, then one sees the Self as Self, only in this last there is no seeing because seeing is being."

Mr. Bhargava also said something about sleep, and this led Bhagavan to speak about sleep as follows:

"What is required is to remain fixed in the Self always. The obstacles to that are distraction by the things of the world (including sense objects, desires and tendencies) on the one hand, and sleep on the other. Sleep is always mentioned in books as the first obstacle to *samadhi* and various methods are prescribed for overcoming it according to the stage of evolution of the person concerned. First, one is enjoined to give up all distraction by the world and its objects or by sleep. But then it is said, for instance in the *Gita*, that one need not give up sleep entirely. Too much and too little are alike undesirable. One should not sleep at all during the daytime and even during the night restrict sleep to the middle portion, from about ten to two. But another method that is prescribed is not to bother about sleep at all. When it overtakes you, you can do nothing about it, so simply remain fixed in the Self or in meditation every

moment of your waking life and take up the meditation again the moment you wake, and that will be enough. Then even during sleep the same current of thought or meditation will be working. This is evident because if a man goes to sleep with any strong thought working in his mind he finds the same thought there when he wakes. It is of the man who does this with meditation that it is said that even his sleep is *samadhi.* A good way to reduce the amount of sleep needed is to take only *sattvic* food and that in moderation and to avoid work or activity of any kind."

22-7-46

This morning Vaidyanathan, the R.D.O., came into the hall and asked whether he could bring in the adviser, Ramamurti. Bhagavan gave permission and he brought in Ramamurti and his party. Ramamurti began to speak to Bhagavan in Telugu and said, "I know that Bhagavan speaks Telugu, because I came here ten years ago with Raghaviah and found that Bhagavan spoke Telugu quite well. This (pointing to the man next to him) is my brother. He has opened an Institute of Naturopathy in Bangalore. Kameswara Sarma is also working there."

Thereupon his brother said, "Bhagavan was pleased to send his blessings when the institute was opened." After that he added, "I find it difficult to believe in a personal God. In fact I find it impossible. But I can believe in an impersonal God, a Divine Force which rules and guides the world, and it would be a great help to me, even in my work of healing, if this faith were increased. May I know how to increase this faith?"

After a slight pause Bhagavan replied, "Faith is in things unknown; but the Self is self-evident. Even the greatest egoist cannot deny his own existence, that is to say, cannot deny the Self. You can call the ultimate Reality by whatever name you like and say that you have faith in it or love for it, but who is there who will not have faith in his own existence or love for himself? That is because faith and love are our real nature."

A little later Ramamurti asked, "That which rises as 'I' within us is the Self, is it not?"

Bhagavan: No; it is the ego that rises as 'I'. That from which it arises is the Self.

Ramamurti: They speak of a lower and a higher *atman.*

Bhagavan: There is no such thing as lower or higher in *atman.* Lower and higher apply to the forms, not to the Self or *atman.*

Soon after, the party took leave, declining an invitation to stay to lunch, as they had already arranged for lunch elsewhere.

In the afternoon Mr. Tayal of Calcutta spoke with Bhagavan again.

Tayal: I do not always concentrate on the same centre in the body. Sometimes I find it easier to concentrate on one centre and sometimes on another. And sometimes when I concentrate on one centre the thought of its own accord goes and fixes itself in another. Why is that?

Bhagavan: It may be because of past practices of yours. But in any case it is immaterial on which centre you concentrate since the real heart is in every centre and even outside the body. On whatever part of the body you may concentrate or on whatever external object, the heart is there.

K.M. Jivrajani, intervening, asked: Can one concentrate at one time on one centre and at another time on another or should one concentrate always consistently on the same centre?

Bhagavan: As I have just said, there can be no harm wherever you concentrate, because concentration is only a means of giving up thoughts. Whatever the centre or object on which you concentrate, he who concentrates is always the same.

24-7-46

Bhargava: What is awareness and how can one obtain and cultivate it?

Bhagavan: You are awareness. Awareness is another name for you. Since you are awareness there is no need to attain or cultivate it.

This was obviously a bit too much for Bhargava and he was wondering how it was an answer to his question, but Bhagavan came to his help by adding: All that you have to do is to give up being aware of other things, that is of the not-Self. If one gives up being aware of them then pure awareness alone remains, and that is the Self."

28-7-46 Morning

At about 10 a.m. as I entered the hall, Bhagavan was telling a visitor from Jaipur, "What is the use of coming away from your house? You have left one home. This is another home. What can the home do? Nothing. It is the mind that does everything." After saying this he continued: "Immediately the question is asked. 'Then why did you come away from home'?" I asked Bhagavan, "Why, did this man also ask that question?"

Bhagavan: No. He has not asked it. But I myself realise the inconsistency (*எனக்குள்ளேயே உதைச்சிக்கிறதே*).

On previous occasions, Bhagavan has answered this question in the following way, "I came away because it was my *prarabdha*, and you will also go away if it is your *prarabdha*."

In the evening, some *bairagi* from Rishikesh came and complained in Hindi before Bhagavan for a long time that some Malayali *sadhus* there were trying to wipe out the existence of Ramanasramam at Rishikesh, founded by one Govindananda 25 years ago, and that he had come here to see that the land on which the Asramam was built 25 years ago is purchased and

duly registered, so that nobody can oust the present inmates of the Asramam from the place. He was told that the *Sarvadhikari* who alone could deal with such matters was absent and that Bhagavan would do nothing. The *bairagi* was greatly vexed and left the hall, even without staying for supper.

On the 29th I left for Chingleput and returned only on the night of 2-8-46.

3-8-46

I find among the arrivals here during my absence the Zamindarini of Vuyyur visiting the Asramam for the first time and another young boy of nine years, Apparao, hailing from Anakapalle. The boy is in some ways precocious and professes to be inclined towards *sannyasa* or spiritual life and is remarkably free from all fear. It seems he heard about Bhagavan first from his father who visited Bhagavan about two years ago. The boy remembers and narrates accurately some incidents in Bhagavan's life at Skandasramam and Virupakshi which he has heard from his father or others. It seems some swami visiting Anakapalle recently spoke about Bhagavan, and hearing that, the boy in a mood of enthusiasm has run away here all by himself unknown to his parents. It is said that once before he ran away to Benares and stayed there for a day and returned. When somebody asked him, "Is it proper for you to take up this sort of life so soon? Your business now is to attend school and learn," he replied, "Did not Shankara leave his home when he was only seven?" The boy is still here and our Nagamma has written to his mother about the boy's arrival.

This afternoon, at 2-30 p.m., I found Bhagavan seated on a cot in the dining hall. While I was wondering why, a party of a dozen devotees came and took their seats in front of Bhagavan. They soon started a *bhajan,* which went on till 4 p.m. and was full of devotion. The party had come from Srivilliputtur, where

they belong to 'Rama Matam' which, it seems, has been in existence for more than fifty years. They not only sang, but danced and performed *kummi* and went through various movements, all reminiscent of Krishna's diversions in Brindavan.

After evening *parayana,* P.C. Desai and Viswanath were correcting in Bhagavan's presence the proofs of Kapali Sastri's Sanskrit commentary on *Ramana Gita*.

4-8-46

This morning Yogi Ramiah arrived. About 9-30 a.m. Bhagavan was looking into the Tamil paper *Hindusthan* and read out to me the following dialogue from it.

1st man: It is only if sorrows or troubles come to us that we think of God.

2nd man: Ah, you fool. If we are always thinking of God, how can any sorrows or troubles come to us?

Why Bhagavan drew my attention to this, I do not know. I wonder if it is because I generally argue with him that it should not be necessary for an all-powerful and all-loving God to make us pass through pain to turn us towards Him.

Most of the day the proof correction went on.

5-8-46

The proof-reading continued today and was finished in the evening. The boy Apparao would seem to be only a truant. His brother has written to Nagamma in reply. The Zamindarini of Vuyyur, who is leaving for Madras today, has taken the boy with her promising to send him by train to Anakapalle.

6-8-46 Morning

A visitor introduced himself to Bhagavan as one who was at Singapore for many years and who knows Mr. Narayana

Iyer of Singapore. I found later that this gentleman is Rajam Iyer from Tinnevelly.

In the afternoon, T.S. Rajagopal, while clearing and rearranging the book shelves, came across a notebook. Bhagavan said, "This is the notebook K.K. Nambiar gave me. It was a very strange thing. There used to be a number of bound notebooks like this with us then. But still, Madhavan did not give me one, though I was asking for one for two or three days. Somehow, he was indifferent and I too did not press him. On the third day, Nambiar, who was then engineer here, came and gave me this notebook and said 'Here is the notebook Bhagavan wanted'. Then it came out that he had a dream in which, it seems, I told him I wanted a notebook of such and such a kind and of such and such dimensions. He is now in America."

7-8-46 Afternoon

A notebook in which I had written down some favourite Tamil songs of mine was missing for some time and so I began copying those songs again in a fresh notebook. This was brought to Bhagavan's notice by T.S.R., and soon afterwards Mr. Somasundaram Pillai of Cuddalore came and told me that my old notebook had not been lost but was with his family. In this connection, T.S.R. told me, "Various incidents, too numerous to remember, happen like this. The moment I told Bhagavan, you got your notebook. It seems Bhagavan's mother once wanted *kadukkai* (Indian myrobolan) and soon afterwards somebody brought it. You ask Bhagavan about it." Thereupon I asked Bhagavan and he said, "It was not mother that wanted *kadukkai*. I used to have a cough and also constipation in those days. I was then in Virupakshi Cave. I used to munch *kadukkai* now and then. One day our stock of *kadukkai* had become exhausted. In those days, overseer (Sesha Iyer) used to come to me daily in the evenings, after his usual official round in the town, and he used to look after our requirements. So we told

him we wanted *kadukkai*. He would generally attend promptly to any such want. But, somehow, he did not send it the next day and so I told Palaniswami, 'When you go to fetch meals from the *chattram* this noon, remind the overseer about the *kadukkai*.' But before he went, the following incident happened. One Adimulam and his friends, from a village near Chengam, used to come here once a month, to go round the Hill. They would visit me also. They came that day, stayed with me some time, took leave and departed. After going a few paces, they came back and asked if we had any possible use for *kadukkai*. We said 'Yes' and then they brought a whole bag of them and requested us to keep it. We took about two measures, selecting the best, and returned the rest to them. It seems, as they were coming, they found this *kadukkai* all along the Chengam Road and they had gathered a whole bag. Evidently, some bags, carried overnight in the bandies plying on that road, were leaking and these had spilled out. So, I asked Palaniswami to tell the overseer not to send *kadukkai* from the town."

When he was finishing the above narration, Mr. Kuppanna came and prostrated himself before Bhagavan. Bhagavan said, "Look at this. We are talking about the overseer and here is his nephew." (K. is overseer's brother's son.) Then T.S.R. put in, "Such coincidences are too numerous. Recently, we spoke about Janaki Ammal and she arrived the following day. The other day, Krishnaswami remarked to Bhagavan that Yogi Ramiah had not come here for about two years, and he arrived the following day and is with us now." Bhagavan continued, "Kuppuswami's coming reminds me of another incident. One day, for something or other, I wanted dried grapes and asked those with me whether we had any in the Asramam. They had none. And we thought no more of that. That night Kuppuswami's father arrived from Madras, and he brought with him a *viss* of good, clean dried grapes, not the sticky and dirty stuff which we generally get here. It seems he arrived in the

town late in the night and wanted to buy some sweets to bring them to me. He had never before brought any such thing, but on that occasion it struck him he should buy something for me. It seems all the shops were closed. But one grocer's shop was open and he went there. He had no idea of purchasing grapes at all. But the shopkeeper volunteered the information, 'I have fresh, good dried grapes, recently arrived. They are very good. Buy some.' And he bought a viss and took it to us."

Bhagavan added, "The notebook incident is even more remarkable. Nambiar came and sat in the hall as usual. As he was leaving, he came and showed the notebook to me. I asked him what the notebook was for, and he said, 'You asked for it and so I have brought it. You came in my dream and asked for it, giving me full directions as to length, width, thickness, etc., and so I have made it accordingly and brought it.' Madhavan was not then in the hall. When he returned I called him and said, 'What have I been asking you for, these two or three days?' He replied, 'That bound notebook.' Then I asked, 'Why didn't you give it to me?' He replied, 'Somehow I forgot about it.' Then I showed him the notebook brought by Nambiar and told him, 'You would not give it and so he has brought this.' Mr. Nambiar is now in America. Mrs. Dowe has written about Nambiar and Bose. She likes Nambiar very much and says he is a quiet man, unlike Bose, who is talkative. Such happenings were very common in the case of Ayyaswami who was with me. The moment I thought of anything, the same thought would occur to him and he would do what I wanted. I used to ask him, 'Why did you do this?' and he would reply, 'I don't know. Somehow the thought came to me and so I did it'." T.S.R. said, "How is it, it is not our good fortune to have such calls made on us, as on Nambiar?" Then I told him, "Why? You were asked to get ink and you brought the same." Then Bhagavan said, "Yes. He brought a bottle of Stephens ink, saying he had a dream in which I wanted it."

When Bhagavan said, "Things like these have not been included in any book, in any of the biographies, I think." I replied, "I am noting down all such things in my diary. I shan't omit them."

This morning, T.S.R.'s son-in-law K. Sarma and his wife and child arrived here. Bhagavan made kind enquiries of them and asked Sarada if her child Lakshmi was talking now and she replied, "She talks a few words and supplements them by gestures." In the afternoon, a visitor Ramanatha Poddar, arrived from Bombay and enquired after L. Sarma and his son K. Sarma. It seems these two tried their naturopathy on R.P.'s relation about a year ago and then stayed in his house for about two months.

This morning, Yogi Ramiah brought a small notebook in which Bhagavan had long ago copied for the Yogi some of Bhagavan's works, and wanted the binding to be mended. Bhagavan gave some directions and entrusted the work to T.S.R. In the evening T.S.R. gave the notebook mended to Bhagavan and Bhagavan approved of the work and handed it to Yogi, saying, "Look at your notebook now." Yogi said, "All is Bhagavan's grace," or some such thing. Muruganar took up the notebook and, seeing only a fourth of the notebook had been written up and the rest was empty, quoted the words from the *Purusha Sukta*, and remarked, "Like a fourth only of God manifesting in the entire universe and the remaining three-fourths lying outside it unknown, this book contains only a fourth of Bhagavan" and all laughed, including Bhagavan.

8-8-46

Mr. Viswanath said, "Shroff is asking me to find out from Bhagavan why it is that in spite of his being sincerely keen on being near Bhagavan, he did not get posted to Madras or any place near Tiruvannamalai, but was sent to Bombay." Bhagavan replied, "What can we say? Things happen in a way we don't understand. Those whom one never expects suddenly come

here. Some who are here are suddenly and unexpectedly made to go away from here. What can we say about it?" About 10 a.m. Mrs. Desai read out before Bhagavan her Gujarati verse translation of Jagadisa Sastri's *Abhayashtakam*, an English translation of which was recently made by Mr.V. Iyer for inclusion in the *Golden Jubilee Souvenir* volume. Bhagavan received today the first copy of *New Times*. It seems when Mr. Tirumal Rao was here recently he took from Mr. Frydman a small article on Bhagavan for inclusion in the first issue of his paper. For the benefit of all, I read out the article in the hall. Bhagavan said, "Show it to Mr. Frydman."

Afternoon

Yogi Ramiah gave his notebook to Bhagavan and said, pointing to Muruganar, "People like him would write verses on occasions like the forthcoming Jubilee. But people like me can do no such thing. Instead, I want Bhagavan to write something in my notebook." Thereupon Bhagavan wrote on the back of the front page in the notebook, which he found blank, the Telugu version of the Tamil song which Bhagavan had composed when the late Somasundara Swami requested Bhagavan to write an '*எழுத்து*' in his notebook. The Sanskrit word for *எழுத்து* being both a character in the alphabet and an imperishable thing, Bhagavan wrote punningly:

அக்கரம தோரெழுத் தாகுமிப் புத்தகத்தோ
ரக்கரமா மஃதெழுத வாசித்தா—யக்கரமாம்
ஓரெழுத்தென் றுந்தானு யுள்ளத் தொளிர்வதாம்
ஆரெழுத வல்லா ரதை.

Here in this book I write
For you to read
An *akshara*,
But who can write
The *Akshara*
For ever shining in the heart?

9-8-46

In the morning *tapal* was a letter from Mr. V. P. Sastri. It was full of devotion to Bhagavan and said how Bhagavan and his teachings were unique.

Afternoon

About 3-30 p.m., Bhagavan was reading a letter going to the post. After returning it to Mauni, he said, "One says my subtle body is three miles long — three miles," and laughed. It seems Mr. G. V. S. of Nellore came across a swami, Narasimham I think by name, who said this. He also said Aurobindo's subtle body was three furlongs long. Nagamma reported this. Bhagavan laughed and said, "How long is his own subtle body?"

Bhagavan read out from a Tamil journal a passage which said, "It is false philosophy which regards the world as false or full of misery. If you learn to use the intelligence and the power which is latent within you, you can live happily in this world." After reading this out, Bhagavan said, "These people belong to the school which believes in *sakti* and *siddhis*." He also added, "But I suppose they too will have to die."

This morning we had gruel and groundnuts for breakfast. Bhagavan told us this sort of gruel used to be given to him by the famous Keerai Patti in those days and so they thought they would try and prepare the same here today. It is made of milk and rice, with fenugreek, a little garlic, a little dried ginger, a little salt and sugar. Bhagavan said that the gruel had not come out quite well and that a little more salt and sugar should have been added.

In the evening, after *parayana*, Viswanath read out some songs from *Uma Sahasram* and also some other Sanskrit songs of Nayana on the Goddess, apparently because this is Varalakshmi *vrata* day.

10-8-46 Morning

Bhagavan came across some verses in honour of the late R. Raghava Aiyangar by his relation M. Raghava Aiyangar, in today's *Swadesamitran* and, seeing that Muruganar was not in the hall, asked Viswanath to tell him about it. Bhagavan added, "Ever since R.'s demise, in every paper, appreciations have been regularly appearing. But these are in verse and composed by his close relation. They are *அத்தைப்பிள்ளை அம்மாஞ்சி* (cousins). I think M. would like to see the verses." In this connection I said, "Would not Muruganar write something, seeing they were great friends?" To this Viswanath said, "Not likely, because he has taken up the stand that he should not sing the praises of any but Bhagavan." Mrs. Taleyarkhan wanted to know about R. Aiyangar and Bhagavan told her, "He was the Samasthana Vidvan of Ramnad, the Poet Laureate, you may call it, of that State." Then, we fell to talking about the small patronage, poets as a class have had in our country, and remarked that things were getting better, with such events in our days as the poet Ramalingam of Namakkal being presented with a purse of Rs.10,000. Muruganar's vow also reminded me of the famous Telugu poet, Pothana, declining to dedicate his *Bhagavatam* to his king, in spite of the earnest entreaties of his brother-in-law Srinatha, the court poet, and the commands of the king. This story was then related to Mrs. Taleyarkhan by Mr. G.V. Subba Rao.

The post brought a letter from Chinnaswami. Bhagavan said, on perusing it, "It seems they have gone to Madras and will meet the Raja of Ramnad there. They seem to have effected a little alteration in the Madura house, renovating the two rooms in front, making the whole thing one hall and having the street entrance in the middle of the house instead of on one side as before." Bhagavan asked the note to be shown to Mrs. T., as it contained the information that some contribution made by her had been utilised for this purpose, though originally it was

thought the sum could be spent on the forthcoming Jubilee. The letter was accordingly shown to her by Viswanath.

Afternoon

As soon as Muruganar came, Bhagavan told him about the article in *Swadesamitran* and also about another in the Tamil *Hindustan* on R.R. Aiyangar, and gave the two papers to him. He also added, "The latter article concludes by saying that R.R. and the late Rt. Hon. V.S.S. Sastri were great friends and, except for the fact they employed different languages, they were equally great speakers."

Bhagavan gave Nagamma some instruction as to where and how she might begin the portion in the life of Jnaneswar which she is translating into Telugu — the portion where Jnaneswar goes to the forest, argues with his father and brings him back to the city and family. In this connection, Bhagavan wanted to see where and how we began when we translated the above portion for Manu Subedar's benefit, and so I took out Manu Subedar's 1945 edition of *Gita Explained* (*Jnaneswari*) in which the above translation is given as an appendix. Bhagavan perused it and said, "We shall begin the Telugu translation in some such way."

After evening *parayana*, Desai began reading some verses in Sanskrit and translating them into English. After a few minutes, I asked Bhagavan what it was all about, and then he said, "Just now they have found that there is some space available in the Jubilee volume and think that the same could be filled up by a few verses which are really *stotras* from the Sanskrit Biography written by Viswanatha Sastri. So Desai is translating them. Viswanath is probably already translating them into Tamil or English without telling these people." Then Bhagavan told Desai, "You had better write your translation in English. We shall all go through it then and see."

11-8-46

This morning, the young man Natarajan of Tanjore arrived. He brought from Janaki Ammal a walking stick with a silver knob and a pair of wooden slippers with silver gilt for Bhagavan. Bhagavan said, "I shall touch them and give them back. Let her have them in her puja." So saying, he inspected them and gave them back to the attendant. Later, I asked N. and found out that the allusion in the seventh stanza of his *Vetkai* (வேட்கை) is to the following incident: It seems one morning during his last visit he came into the dining hall late for his lunch, and that all except Bhagavan had risen. It seems then Bhagavan also rose and came and stood by N.'s side and when he tried to get up Bhagavan told him '*வந்த வேலையைப் பார்*' (attend to the business for which you have come) and walked on. N. now read out before Bhagavan his poem '*குயிலொடு கூறல்*' which he had not read out on his previous visit.

Afternoon

Bhagavan looked into the Tamil *Bhakta Vijayam* and told Nagamma, "You may begin by saying that when the Brahmins complained to the king against Jnaneswar's grandfather, that he was spoiling the Brahmin caste, etc., Jnaneswar went to the king and argued with him so ably on behalf of his grandfather, that the king was greatly struck by the boy's genius and wanted to see what sort of man was the father who gave birth to such a child, and sent Jnaneswar with his own retinue to go to the forest and fetch his father." Bhagavan also asked me to show Mr. D.S. Sastri (Nagamma's brother), who arrived this morning, the appendix to Manu Subedar's *Gita* (*Jnaneswari*). Later the talk turned to the proposed journal for our Asramam, on which Mr. D.S. Sastri has been very keen. D.S. Sastri said that the Calcutta gentleman who was equally keen, met him at Madras and talked to him about it. D.S.S. said, "But it won't do to edit it from Calcutta. There must be someone here who would show

everything to Bhagavan and get his approval before it is sent to the press." I suggested Dr. Anantanarayana Rao's name, as I felt unequal for any such responsible work. Bhagavan said, "Even today we received a letter from somebody who asks if there is not some journal — some organ of the Asramam."

Later, on a visitor's request, Bhagavan said, "Concentrating one's thoughts solely on the Self will lead to happiness or bliss. Drawing in the thoughts, restraining them and preventing them from going outwards is called *vairagya*. Fixing them in the Self is *sadhana* or *abhyasa*. Concentrating on the Heart is the same as concentrating on the Self. The Heart is another name for the Self."

This afternoon, I was reading the current *Vedanta Kesari* which begins with some conversation of Latu Maharaj (Adbhutananda). Then I told Bhagavan that Adbhutananda was Latu, who was wholly illiterate; that such a man was later able to hold such conversations as are recorded in this article was regarded a miracle and so Latu was named Adbhutananda. Bhagavan said, "Is it so?"

12-8-46

This morning, Bhagavan was perusing a letter from Madhavi Amma (K.K. Nambiar's sister) and told us, "She says: 'If I were a man, would I allow anybody else to massage Bhagavan's legs?' She says this in connection with Madhavan and his death. She massaged my legs once. She gave hot fomentation. She is expert at that. The cloth would hardly touch my limbs. She would apply just the hot vapour alone to the legs."

Natarajan read out today his *Vetkai*, consisting of ten songs. I had asked him to read this yesterday. But he read first his '*குயிலொடு கூறல்*' (*Kuyilodu Kooral*) and in the singing so lost himself that he forgot all about my request. So he read out *Vetkai* today. He also read out another song

composed by him today in which he has embodied Janaki Ammal's request sent through him to Bhagavan. He told Bhagavan, "I have already shown it to Muruganar." Bhagavan perused it and made one small correction.

In the evening Desai and Viswanath read out their English translation of the eight or nine verses of *stotra* extracted from V. Sastri's Sanskrit life of Bhagavan.

13-8-46

In the afternoon Mr. T.K. Doraiswami Iyer told Bhagavan of Prof. Swaminathan and others in Madras suggesting that on the Jubilee Day we might have here some music performance and speeches in different languages from eminent persons. Bhagavan did not seem to be much in favour of it. He said, "What is this, sending for such people from such long distance? After all, each of them can speak only a few minutes as there are to be so many. And what expense!" Then I told Bhagavan, "This is all for our benefit. These people who will be coming here will be coming not simply to lecture. They will be coming primarily for Bhagavan's *darshan* and we are going to ask them to speak too. That is all."

14-8-46

This morning Mrs. Taleyarkhan told Bhagavan, "Bhagavan, I have got a letter from Shanta (the Maharani of Baroda). Bhagavan has performed a miracle and she is writing about it. It seems she went out in a car and on the way the car broke down and the driver could do nothing about it. So, it seems, he took the Rani's permission and went to phone for another car. Meanwhile, it seems a striking-looking and mild *sadhu* suddenly appeared on the scene and touched the car and said, 'You can go on now.' The driver returned and when he started the engine, the car moved on without any trouble. The Rani thinks it was all Bhagavan's grace. She is writing, expressing regret for her inability to be

present at the Jubilee." So saying Mrs. T. showed the letter and Bhagavan perused it. He came across "Roman Emperor" in the letter and asked, "Who is the Roman Emperor?" I told Bhagavan that by that they mean our *Sarvadhikari*, and Mrs. T. added "Yes. We call him that".

Soon afterwards, as directed by Bhagavan, I read out a long letter from a devotee of Calcutta who was here two or three years ago for five or six days, it seems. In that letter he relates how, after he thought that Bhagavan was not showing him any grace, suddenly on the fifth day of his stay, he got, by no effort of his own, experience of a state in which consciousness of body, world and all, totally left him and he was pure consciousness and nothing else.

Afternoon

The *Sarvadhikari*, Mr. T.K.D., and Ranganatha Iyer have all fixed up a programme for the speeches and the music performance on 1-9-46, and they sent me to Bhagavan with it for getting his approval for the same. He declined to give any opinion and said, "Let them fix it up as they like. Don't ask me anything about it." When I pleaded for his approval, he remarked, "Why should they consult me about this now? Did they consult me before deciding to have these speeches and music, that they should consult me now about the time?" Thereupon I said, "True, at Madras, on the suggestion of Mr. Swaminathan and others, they had decided on having all these things. But even now, if Bhagavan does not like all this, we can stop it, what is there?" Thereupon he relented and said, "You may tell them I have no objection. But I must be left off at my usual hours." I at once replied, "Of course, that will be done" and we so ordered the programme that Bhagavan could rise at 4-45 p.m. as usual, after all the speeches, and could come back about 5-00 p.m. to start the music by Musiri.

In the evening, Muruganar brought a few verses composed by him at our request for the Golden Jubilee.

Bhagavan at once went through them and made one or two corrections and kept them aside saying, "Tomorrow we shall do the rest, deciding what heading we shall give them."

17-8-46

This morning, a number of Gujerati visitors arrived here, evidently returning from Pondicherry, after *darshan* there on the 15th. One of them asked Bhagavan, "What is meant by Self-realisation? Materialists say there is no such thing as God or Self." Bhagavan said, "Never mind what the materialists or others say; and don't bother about Self or God. Do *you* exist or not? What is your idea of yourself? What do you mean by 'I'?" The visitor said he did not understand by 'I' his body, but something within his body. Thereupon, Bhagavan continued, "You concede 'I' is not the body but something within it. See then from whence the 'I' arises within the body. See whether it arises and disappears, or is always present. You will admit there is an 'I' which emerges as soon as you wake up, sees the body, the world and all else, and ceases to exist when you sleep; and that there is another 'I' which exists apart from the body, independently of it, and which alone is with you when the body and the world do not exist for you, as for instance in sleep. Then ask yourself if you are not the same 'I' during sleep and during the other states. Are there two 'I's? You are the same one person always. Now, which can be real, the 'I' which comes and goes, or the 'I' which always abides? Then you will know that you are the Self. This is called Self-realisation. Self-realisation is not however a state which is foreign to you, which is far from you, and which has to be reached by you. You are always in that state. You forget it, and identify yourself with the mind and its creation. To cease to identify yourself with the mind is all that is required. We have so long identified ourselves with the not-Self that we find it difficult to regard ourselves as the Self. Giving up this identification with the not-Self is all

that is meant by Self-realisation. How to realise, *i.e*., make real, the Self? We have realised, *i.e*., regarded as real, what is unreal, the not-Self. To give up such false realisation is Self-realisation."

In the evening, after *parayana*, a visitor asked Bhagavan, "How to control the wandering mind?" He prefaced the question with the remark, "I want to ask Bhagavan a question which is troubling me." Bhagavan replied, after laughing, "This is nothing peculiar to you. This is the question which is always asked by everybody and which is dealt with in all the books like the *Gita*. What way is there, except to draw in the mind as often as it strays or goes outward, and to fix it in the Self, as the *Gita* advises? Of course, it won't be easy to do it. It will come only with practice or *sadhana*." The visitor said, "The mind goes after only what it desires and won't get fixed on the object we set before it." Bhagavan said, "Everybody will go after only what gives happiness to him. Thinking that happiness comes from some object or other, you go after it. See from whence all happiness, including the happiness you regard as coming from sense objects, really comes. You will understand all happiness comes only from the Self, and then you will always abide in the Self."

21-8-46 Afternoon

A visitor from Bengal asked Bhagavan, "Shankara says we are all free, not bound, and that we shall all go back to God from whom we have come as sparks from fire. Then, why should we not commit all sorts of sins?"

Bhagavan: It is true we are not bound, *i.e*., the real Self has no bondage. It is true you will eventually go back to your source. But meanwhile, if you commit sins, as you call them, you have to face the consequences of such sins. You cannot escape their consequences. If a man beats you, then, can you say, 'I am free, I am not bound by these beatings and I don't feel any pain. Let him beat on?' If you

can feel like that, you can go on doing what you like. What is the use of merely saying with your lips 'I am free?'

The visitor also asked, "The books mention several methods for Self-realisation. Which is the easiest and best?"

Bhagavan: Several methods are mentioned to suit several minds. They are all good. You can choose whatever method appeals to you best.

Later, Lakshmi (Sambasiva Rao's sister) read before Bhagavan a few Telugu songs composed by her for Bhagavan's Golden Jubilee. Bhagavan came here fifty years ago on *Navami tithi* following *Gokulashtami* and, as this is *Navami*, the Golden Jubilee of his arrival according to *tithi* will be today, and hence she thought her songs could most appropriately be sung today. She began, however, reading in such a low key that after a few minutes Bhagavan asked her, "Are you able to hear it yourself?" Somebody suggested Nagamma might read the verses instead and so N. read them out aloud.

This morning, Mr. Somasundaram Pillai brought his wife's verses and mine, which he got printed at Conjeevaram and showed to Bhagavan a copy of each set. Bhagavan perused them and said, "The paper is thick and good." Then I explained, "These are the copies to be laid at Bhagavan's feet. The other copies are printed on slightly inferior paper."

On 23-8-46 morning I left for Madras to attend the marriage of my daughter's son on the 28th inst. and returned on the 30th evening.

30-8-46

On the 30th evening, when I arrived, the Asramam was already crowded with devotees who had come from various parts to attend the Jubilee on 1st September. The new (thatched) shed, built contiguous with Bhagavan's hall on its northern side,

had been already completed with the floor also fully cemented, and the old ugly parapet wall of the well had been removed and in its place a fine looking parapet wall erected. The steps leading from the eastern verandah of Bhagavan's hall to the quadrangle and the new shed on the north have been considerably improved and beautified. Further, a temporary shed, contiguous with the new northern shed, has also been put up to provide sitting accommodation to the crowds that are expected on the 1st. I found Bhagavan seated at the western end of the new shed, on a stone platform. Mr. C. Madhavaraya Mudaliar (my brother-in-law) and myself prostrated ourselves. Bhagavan asked, "You have just come? How did you come; and who else?" I replied, "I came by train up to Katpadi, arriving there about 12 noon. From thence I went to Vellore and took the bus and have arrived here just now. There was no difficulty at all about travelling. I and my brother-in-law alone have come now. But Kotiswaran and his wife will come tomorrow evening."

31-8-46 Morning

An address in Malayalam, composed by Narain Pisharoti (our compounder) was read out by him. Then an address in Tamil composed by Uma (*i.e.*, Mrs. Somasundaram Pillai) was read out by her husband.

Most of the morning, the blind Brahmin girl, Janaki Ammal of Conjeevaram, entertained Bhagavan with her music on the Veena.

Afternoon

Mr. Siva Mohan Lal of Hyderabad read out an address in Hindi. We asked him to translate the same into English for the benefit of those who did not know Hindi. But as he could not easily translate it extempore, we asked him to write out the translation and to read the same before Bhagavan later. Then Ramachandra Rao began to read out an address in

Canarese. But soon he began delivering a speech with the writing in his hand only as notes for his speech. Bhagavan also remarked, "He is not simply reading an address. With the address in his hand, he is firing away as he pleases (கையிலே Notes வச்சுண்டு அவர் பாட்டுக்கு அடிக்கிறார்)."

He has also composed two songs in Canarese and he finished by saying that those songs would be sung by Chandramma.

Somasundaram Pillai next read out a message from one Angayarkkanni in Tamil. Next Chandramma read out the Canarese songs of R. Rao.

Finally Balaram read out the Telugu message sent by G.V.Subbaramayya, which was short and sweet. It said in effect, "May the Golden Jubilee of the day which joined Ramana to Arunachala — (that Ramana who is always shedding compassion and grace) — be a grand success!"

1-9-46

This is the Golden Jubilee of Bhagavan's arrival at Tiruvannamalai. I went to the hall about 5-30 a.m. hoping to see Bhagavan there, to fall at his feet, and to offer some fruits and two bath towels. But I found that today the *parayana* was started about 4 a.m. and closed at 5 a.m. and that Bhagavan went to the bathroom as early as 5 a.m.

After Bhagavan had his breakfast and returned from his stroll, a number of married women (*sumangalis*) headed by Uma came from the Temple in a procession, doing *bhajan* and carrying a milk-pot, and Uma and her daughter sang a Tamil song and offered milk to Bhagavan. He took a spoon of the milk and the rest was distributed among the devotees. Then I read out Colombo Ramachandra's *Ramanashtakam*, in Tamil, and also my five stanzas composed for the Jubilee. Then Uma read out her *Muthumalai* composed for the occasion. Printed

copies of all the three compositions were then distributed to the devotees. Printed copies of tributes by Turiyananda in Tamil, K.Vaidyanatha Aiyar of Vellore in English verse, T.K. Sundaresa Iyer in Tamil verse, and K.R. Seshagiri Aiyar in English were also read out and distributed. One Mr. Bhatt also read out his Canarese songs. Then a gentleman introduced by Dr. T.N.K. gave a performance on *gottu vadyam*. Mr. Chellam Iyer, of *Kalaimagal* office, read out Muruganar's poems composed for the occasion, including one which he composed at the moment.

After lunch Bhagavan would not allow himself even his usual rest, but insisted on being available for devotees who had come from far and near and so, soon after his return from the after-lunch stroll, various addresses in different languages were read out. One of them was from the Hindi Prachar Sabha. Another was Dr. Siva Rao's tribute in English which was read out and also translated into Tamil by Mr. T.K.D. Iyer. Mr. Siva Mohan Lal also read out the English translation of the Hindi address he read to Bhagavan yesterday. Dr. Siva Rao's address in effect said, "I have been trying my humble best to cure Bhagavan of various bodily ailments of his. But all my efforts have proved vain, except to give some temporary relief. I believe this is due to my ego having presumed that it can cure Bhagavan. All people today are offering various things to Bhagavan — fruits, flowers, clothes, books, etc. I have decided to offer my ego. I place it at Bhagavan's feet and beg him to accept it."

About 2-30 p.m., the programme already planned and published for the Jubilee was begun with Mr. Justice Kuppuswamy Aiyer as President. He made a few introductory remarks in English. Then Mr. T.K.D. read out Sir S. Radhakrishnan's article, intended for inclusion in the *Souvenir* Volume, but which, though posted in Calcutta on 7th August, was received here only on the 30th. Then the following spoke: Swami Rajeswarananda and Prof. T.M.P. Mahadevan of the

Madras University, in English, Justice Chandrasekara Iyer in Telugu, Chellam Iyer of *Kalaimagal* office and Omandur Ramaswami Reddiar in Tamil, Mr. S.R. Venkatarama Sastri (of Vivekananda College) in Sanskrit, and Mr. Airavatam Aiyer, in Malayalam. After the speeches, Viswanatha Sastri recited a few Sanskrit songs, and Kunjuswami a few Tamil songs of Bhagavan and of one Venkatarama Iyer (author of *Ramana Stuti Panchakam*). Bhagavan then rose at 4-45 p.m. as usual. After he returned about 5 p.m., Mr. Annamalai Pillai, the local Congress leader, made a speech in Tamil, on behalf of the citizens of Tiruvannamalai, expressing joy and gratitude on Bhagavan's completing fifty years' stay here. Then Musiri Subramania Iyer gave a very moving and devotional musical performance till about 6-45. For the speeches and music excellent loudspeaker arrangements had been made by the local Municipal Chairman and it was a great convenience for the crowds who had gathered. Finally *Veda parayana* brought the day's function to a close.

2-9-46

Early in the morning, old Mr. Ranganatha Iyer told Bhagavan, "We have had a very good shower of rain last night. It is fortunate that it did not interfere with our celebrations yesterday, but came on only in the night after everything was over." Bhagavan said, "I remember the same thing happened on the night of 1-9-1896, when I arrived here. It seems they had no rains for a long time then. But on that night there was a heavy downpour. I was then staying at the *mantapam* in front of the Big Temple. Only that morning for the first time I had discarded all my clothes, except a cod-piece and, on account of the rains beating in, and the cold winds blowing about, I found the cold unbearable, and so I ran from there and took shelter on the pial of a house nearby. About midnight some inmates of the house came out opening the street door and I ran into the Big Temple. For some days after that too, it rained!"

After Bhagavan's morning stroll, various articles about Bhagavan were read out in the hall, two from the *Sunday Times*, one from *Free India* and one from *Bombay Samachar* (in Gujerati). In the afternoon Nagamma read out her Telugu poem on *Ramana Swarna Utsava Vaibhavam*. Only today Bhagavan had time to look at the *Souvenir* Volume, which was presented to him on the Jubilee Day. He had been given a volume bound in silk and with gold-washed front and back pages. The deluxe edition had a gold-washed front page. The library in the hall had been given one ordinary copy and one deluxe edition. The *Sarvadhikari* came and saw these, as also a specially bound volume of V. Sastri's Sanskrit *Life of Bhagavan* and instructed T.S.R. that the specially bound volumes of the *Souvenir* and V. Sastri's book should not be given to anybody. After *Sarvadhikari* left, Bhagavan asked T.S.R., laughing, "He has told you these volumes should not be given to anybody. May I read them?" T.S.R. said, "He only meant I should not give these to anybody except Bhagavan."

In the evening Mr. Desai read out an English translation of Ganga Ben Patel's Gujerati article in the *Bombay Samachar*. There was a reference in the article to the cow Lakshmi; and Rani Mazumdar who was listening to the article from the verandah close to the eastern window of the hall asked me to put the following question to Bhagavan and get his reply.

Question: It is said that the old lady Keerai Patti was born as Lakshmi. How can one, who had the unique good fortune of serving Bhagavan well and lovingly, have to be born again at all, and even if she had to be born, how could she be born as a cow? Is it not said in all our books that birth as a human being is the best birth one can have?

Bhagavan: I never said Keerai Patti had been born as a cow.

I said, "I have already told Rani so. But she says, 'It has been said and also written down in so many books and articles

and Bhagavan has not denied it. So we can take it as the truth'." I added, "But she puts the question on the assumption that the cow is the old woman reborn, whether Bhagavan has said so or not, and she desires an answer." Thereupon Bhagavan said, "It is not true that birth as a man is necessarily the highest, and that one must attain realisation only from being a man. Even an animal can attain Self-realisation."

In the conversation that followed on this, Bhagavan said, "Even as a calf only some days old, Lakshmi behaved in an extraordinary way. She would daily come to me and place her head at my feet. On the day the foundation was laid for the *goshala* (cow-shed), she was so jubilant and came and took me for the function. Again on the day of *grahapravesam* she came straight to me at the time appointed and took me. In so many ways and on so many occasions, she behaved in such a sensible and extremely intelligent way that one cannot but regard it as an extraordinary cow. What are we to say about it?"

This night Mr. Framji Dorabji, ably helped by Mrs. Taleyarkhan, showed Bhagavan the film 'Nandanar' in Tamil in our dining hall.

3-9-46 Afternoon

Nagamma read out Nellore Narasinga Rao's poem on Bhagavan for the Jubilee. Bhagavan suggested that the *Souvenir* be read out, adding, "I don't know what it contains. I have not looked into the articles so far." Thereupon I read out a few pages. In the night the film 'Tukaram' in Marathi was shown to Bhagavan.

4-9-46 Morning

About 10 a.m. I continued reading the *Souvenir*. In the afternoon again, I read out the Souvenir and then Viswanath and also Balaram.

This night another film, 'Bhartruhari' in Hindi, was shown to Bhagavan.

5-9-46

Reading out the *Souvenir* was continued by me, V. and B. in the afternoon.

The whole day Bhagavan was trying to find out the true history of King Bhartruhari and looked into a number of books, giving various versions of the famous King's life. The first account Bhagavan looked into was Banky Bihari's introduction to his English translation of Bhartruhari's poems. Finally Bhagavan said, "No version agrees with another, and there are four or five of them. But all agree that the immortality-yielding object was given by the King to his queen and by the queen to someone else and that the King renounced all because of his sudden discovery that his queen was not true to him. In that, last night's film also did not err from the original."

6 to 9-9-46

Reading of the *Souvenir* was continued and the same ended on the last date.

11-9-46

It seems today Rangaswami (an attendant) was trying to coax Bhagavan into eating an orange about noon and, when he told Bhagavan, "These oranges and other fruits are all brought in by devotees only so that Bhagavan may use them. So, why should not Bhagavan use them?" It seems Bhagavan replied, "Why should you think that I eat only when I eat with this mouth? I eat through a thousand mouths." R. told me of this.

Today Mr. T.P. Ramachandra Aiyer arrived from Madras. Bhagavan said on seeing him, "What, you have gone down very much. You look a different man." T.P.R. said, "My foot became

swollen. The doctors couldn't diagnose it properly; besides, I have had a lot of strain (அலைச்சல்)." Bhagavan is criticised by some as being so impersonal and abstracted that he cannot appeal to most people. I record this instance to refute such criticism. That one remark of Bhagavan must have meant so much to T.P.R. Many others, including myself, have had such proofs of love and attention from Bhagavan. This reminds me that just a few days ago, S. Doraiswamy Iyer came here one afternoon with four or five of his friends, and Bhagavan remarked as soon as S.D. entered the hall, "Very unexpected", and thereupon S.D. explained, "These friends suddenly proposed about 10 a.m. today that we should come here, have *darshan* of Bhagavan, visit the temple and go back, and that is how I came."

12-9-46

Casually going through T.P.R.'s notebook I came across an entry there — *Mithya=Jagat; Brahma bhavam=Satyam.*

As I remembered Bhagavan occasionally saying *mithya* means *satyam*, but did not quite grasp its significance, I asked Bhagavan about it. He said, "Yes. I say that now and then. What do you mean by real or *satyam*? Which do you call real?" I answered, "According to Vedanta, that which is permanent and unchanging, that alone is real. That of course is the definition of Reality." Then, Bhagavan said, "These names and forms which constitute the world always change and perish. Hence they are called *mithya*. To limit the Self and regard it as these names and form is *mithya*. To regard all as Self is the Reality. The *Advaitin* says *jagat* is *mithya*, but he also says 'All this is Brahman'. So it is clear that what he condemns is regarding the world as such to be real, not regarding the world as Brahman. He who sees the Self, sees only the Self in the world also. To the *jnani* it is immaterial whether the world appears or not. Whether it appears or not, his attention is always on the Self. It is like the letters and the paper on which the letters are printed. You are wholly

engrossed with the letters and have no attention left for the paper. But the *jnani* thinks only of the paper as the real substratum, whether the letters appear on it or not."

13-9-46

Today, one Mrs. Barwell (whose husband, it is said, is a barrister now staying at Almora), accompanied by the principal of the Women's Christian College at Madras, visited the Asramam. The former comes introduced by Miss Merston and has already written to the Asramam for accommodation. The Asramam has not been able to find accommodation for her. But today, Mr. McIver has promised to find accommodation for her in his compound and so she is planning to go and come back here with her things in a week's time. Her friend also goes back with her and intends to spend the forthcoming *dasara* holidays here with some of her students. This lady (the principal) seems to have already met some well-known disciples of Bhagavan, such as Grant Duff.

14-9-46

This morning Mr. Naganariya came and prostrated himself before Bhagavan, placing a manuscript and some fruits at his feet. Bhagavan asked him when he came, and he replied, "I came last night itself." Then Bhagavan looked into the Ms., for a few minutes and returned it. It is *Trisulapura Mahatmyam* in Telugu verse.

Afternoon

When I went into the hall, Bhagavan was reading an article in the Tamil paper *Hindusthan* by K.R.R. Sastri, who has, it seems, just returned from a trip to England and America. In the article, he mentions he visited Ramana Asramam before he made this foreign tour. Then Bhagavan said, "I believe he has sent some poem in Tamil or English for the Jubilee." I

replied that I had seen the poem and that it was in English. But I was not sure whether I read the thing in the *Souvenir* Volume or elsewhere. Not finding it in its contents, I took up the file of cuttings, etc., relating to the Jubilee and as I opened it, it opened, strange to say, exactly at the page where a typed copy of this poem of K.R.R. was found pasted. I showed the same to Bhagavan, and he said, "That is the poem I meant."

Nagamma read out the dedication to *Trisulapura Mahatmyam* of Naganariya, saying, "I find this dedication is a Jubilee tribute to Bhagavan." At the head of each chapter too, N. had a stanza in praise of Bhagavan. So we asked her to read those stanzas also. As the dedication seemed good, I requested G. Subba Rao to give us a free translation in English and he said he would write down one.

My brother has written in a letter to me that Krishna and Nammalvar have said that God will come to us in whatever form we worship Him; I wrote to my brother in my reply, "A *jnani* is the highest manifestation of God on earth, next perhaps only to an *avatar*." In connection with this sentence, I wanted to have my doubt cleared about the relative position of a *jnani* and an *avatar*. Then Bhagavan was pleased to tell me that, according to the books, the *jnani* was higher than the *avatar*. But when I corrected my letter accordingly, he said, "Why do you correct it? Let it go as it is."

A little later, R. Narayana Iyer came and Bhagavan asked him, "You have come by the 3 p.m. train, have you?" He said, "Yes", and added, "The present timings are convenient for me. On Saturday, I can arrive here earlier, and on Mondays I can leave here later than under the old timings."

Then somebody said, "Kalyanarama Aiyer is also now in Tirukoilur" and I asked about his exact relationship to the late Echamma. I was told he was her brother's son. In this connection, his sister, Chellammal, brought up by Echamma was mentioned,

and Mr. Viswanath said, "It was for her that Bhagavan wrote the three songs in Tamil on *sat sang*". Then I said, "I thought it was for Rajammal that Bhagavan wrote them." Then Bhagavan related, "One day I was going out from Skandasramam. In those days Chellamma, Rajamma and others used to go to me on Saturdays and Sundays when they had no school. They would go by themselves to me, whether they had any escort or not. That day I found Chellammal had some bit of a journal or newspaper in her hand and was getting by heart a song from *Yoga Vasishtam* in praise of the benefits of *sat sang:*

அறக்குறைவை நிறைவாக்குஞ் சம்பத்தாக்கு
மாபத்தைச் சுபமாக்கு மசுபந் தன்னைச்
சிறக்குமுயர்ந் தவர்கூட்ட மெனுங் கங்கைச்
சிதநீ ராடினர்க்குச் செந்தீ வேள்வி
யிறக்கரிய தவந்தானந் தீர்த்தம் வேண்டா
மிடர்பந்த மறுத்தெவர்க்கு மினியோராகிப்
பிறப்பெனும்வே லைப்புணையா முணர்வு சான்ற
பெரியோரை யெவ்வகையும் பேணல்வேண்டும்

(The imperfect will become perfect, danger good luck, the inauspicious auspicious, by association with holy men. For those who have bathed in the Ganges of fellowship with such realized souls, *homa* (offering, oblations in fire), *yagna*, penance, alms-giving, bathing in sacred rivers, are all unnecessary. Seek, therefore, by all means the company of the good and wise, which is a boat to carry one across the ocean of birth and death).

"When I found the girl so keen on the matter I composed those three songs on *sat sang* which are a translation of the Sanskrit songs, with which by that time I had become quite familiar, because they had been so often recited before me by various devotees who visited me. At that time, I did not know that any of those Sanskrit songs had been translated by anybody in Tamil. But some years afterwards, when Rajammal delivered a lecture on *sat sang* she quoted a Tamil stanza which

was a Tamil translation of one of those three songs." Then I said, "I also remember that lecture of hers. It was at Villupuram. They sent me a copy of that lecture."

Bhagavan related how Echamma, after she lost her own daughter, brought up her brother's daughter, this Chellammal, and added, "Chellammal used often to go to me as a school girl. Afterwards too, she always thought of me. In every letter of hers, she would refer to me both in the beginning and the end. She died soon after she gave birth to Ramanan, the boy who is now in Bombay. They brought the boy here, (it was soon after we came here and we had only a small thatched room in which the tomb was located and I was also staying). On seeing the babe, I could not help thinking of its mother and I wept for her." (Bhagavan was moved even now after several years when recounting the event to me).

In the evening, after *parayana*, Balaram read out an article in English in the *Sunday Leader* of Allahabad, on Bhagavan and his teachings.

15-9-46

This afternoon, Nagamma read out an account in Telugu of all that took place on the Jubilee Day. I found from what Bhagavan and T.S.R. said that, in addition to what I have noted on the first of September, two other addresses were also read, one from the Arya Vaisya Samajam and another from the firm of Messrs. Munuswami Chetti & Brothers, and that at about 11 a.m. that day, the priests from the Big Temple came with Arunachaleswarar's *prasad* to Bhagavan. Later, Nagamma also read out a portion of Naganariya's Ms. as desired by the author.

17-9-46

This night about 9-15 p.m., T.S.R.'s child Ramana was bitten by something near the well in their compound. After a

few minutes, the child was suffering very much, vomiting and perspiring profusely. They consulted Dr. Siva Rao living next door and he gave something which he said was a general antidote for all poisons. In a few minutes he felt the child's pulse and advised them it would be better to take the child to Bhagavan. They accordingly brought the child and when they entered the Asramam compound the child was in a state almost of collapse, the body having become chill and the breath almost ceasing. They entered the hall, and told Bhagavan, and he touched the child, passing his hand all over the child's body as if soothing the child, and said, "It is nothing. He will be all right." It was only after that, the parents had some hope that the child would survive. When they came out of the hall, they came across our Ramaswami Pillai, and he showed them another visitor who had come to the Asramam only this afternoon, who was an expert in saving people from snake-bites, etc. and pronounced some *mantras* on the child and declared the poison had been got rid of by his *mantras*. The child recovered gradually, and the parents have told me that it was saved only through Bhagavan's grace. Another thing which may also be mentioned here is that the child himself, as soon as he felt pain, cried out, "Let us go to Bhagavan. The pain will go if we go there", though on some occasions he would even refuse to be taken to Bhagavan when the parents proposed to take him there.

This evening at about 6 p.m. Mr. Colombo Ramachandra's letter to Bhagavan with seven copies of his *Ashtakam* was received and Bhagavan gave one to me and one to Somasundaram Pillai as desired by R. in his letter. Bhagavan found the order of the stanzas was not as printed under Bhagavan's directions here. Bhagavan said, "He had stuck to his order". Thereupon I said, "These leaflets must have been printed before R. received our leaflet and the letter accompanying it."

18-9-46

This morning, when I left my room about 9-30 a.m., for the hall, it struck me I might read out the *Ashtakam* of Colombo Ramachandra, of which Bhagavan gave me a copy last evening. As I went and prostrated myself before Bhagavan, he was telling T.S.R. with the *Ashtakam* in his hand, "Should we not have it read out here, as it arrived only last evening?" and. T.S.R. said, "Here Mr. Mudaliar has also come. We will ask him to read it out." Accordingly I read out the same, telling Bhagavan, "Somehow, I too thought of reading this today here and have brought the leaflet with me. Here it is." I had read out the *Ashtakam* before Bhagavan even as it was being composed in parts, and once after all the eight were finished during Ramachandra's illness here; and again I had read it out on Jubilee Day. But it is strange that I should have thought of doing the same today also and that Bhagavan too should have thought of it at the same time.

20-9-46

This afternoon, from a book that Anandammal brought, Bhagavan was able to find out the story of how Goraknath killed his Master Maschendra's child, etc., which Bhagavan was trying to trace on the 5th instant after having seen the film "Bhartruhari" the previous night. In this story it is said that Chandu Nath wanted to write to Goraknath, but not being sure how to address him, in a patronising manner as a superior, or as a junior writing to a senior, finally sent a blank piece of paper. In this connection, Bhagavan said, "This reminds me of an incident in my boyhood. I was quite young and did not know much about letter-writing and I wrote to my aunt's son (father's sister's son) *aneka asirvadam* (*i.e.*, many blessings, in the manner of an elder giving his blessings). When he came, he ridiculed me for having sent blessings to him (who was about 10 years older than myself). But I did not know then who should bless whom. I only knew

that whenever my father wrote to him, he used to write 'My blessings to Ramu', and so I thought that was the way a letter ought to be written. That to some, blessings had to be given and to others salutations — I did not know then."

Mr. Daniel Thomas, minister, visited Bhagavan today about 4 p.m. He stayed in Bhagavan's presence for about 15 minutes and then left. He was presiding over a function in the town in connection with the Golden Jubilee of this Municipality. I was in Tinnevelly for one and a half years in 1910 to 1912, when this gentleman also joined the bar. He put no questions to Bhagavan. The press representative Mr. Tilak was here and apparently took a snap of the minister.

21-9-46

This morning, as directed by Bhagavan, a letter received by me from K. Ramachandra of Colombo and another received by Uma were read out in the hall. The letters described how the Jubilee was celebrated in Mr. Ramachandra's house with about 250 devotees (of different castes), each one of whom placed flowers at Bhagavan's feet and worshipped him, and how all left with the feeling that Bhagavan was present in their midst that day. The letter to Uma quoted two stanzas from *Subrahmanya Bhujangam* as very aptly describing Bhagavan and also said that R.'s *Ashtakam* was really composed by Bhagavan who inspired the lines. Otherwise R. cannot explain why, when the children sing the *Ashtakam* at prayer time, he goes into ecstasy and forgets himself.

In the afternoon, Nagamma read out her revised account of the Jubilee celebrations. It is very well written and full of *bhakti rasa*. It will soon appear in print. When R.'s letter was read out and the two stanzas therein from *Subrahmanya Bhujangam* were quoted, Bhagavan said that it was Mr. K.V.R. Iyer (deceased brother of our Ramanatha Iyer) who first

published from here the above work, though subsequently other editions and some translations in Tamil also have come out.

One Mr. V.P. Sarathi from Masulipatnam had sent a volume of typed poems in English entitled *Nivedana* to Bhagavan. It seems he offered them at Bhagavan's feet in celebration, in his house, on Bhagavan's Jubilee on 1-9-46. They were received at the Asramam recently and T.P.R. read the poems out in the hall. The poems were good and well worth hearing.

22-9-46

Today about 4 p.m. the Minister, Mrs. Rukmini Lakshmipati and Mr. Sivashanmugam (Speaker of the Legislative Assembly) visited the Asramam. They were escorted by local Congress leader Mr. Annamalai Pillai and the Deputy Collector, Mr. Vaidyanatha Aiyar. They sat in the hall for some time and then left.

1-10-46

Dilip Kumar Roy of Aurobindo's Ashram came here last night, and this morning he sang a few songs before Bhagavan. Later when Bhagavan was perusing *The New Times* of today, he read out to us that at Mount Abu, two serpents fought each other, that one vanquished the other which became unconscious and at that stage a boy who came across the scene did some first aid to the defeated serpent and put a cold bandage over it, that the injured serpent slowly revived, that seeing all this, the victor serpent was enraged and bit the boy, that the vanquished snake, which had by now recovered and revived under the boy's treatment, ran to the boy, sucked out the other serpent's poison and saved the boy. When Bhagavan read all this out to us, I said, "It looks incredible." Mrs. T. to whom T.P.R. recounted the story also remarked, "Is this a story or what?" Then Dilip asked Bhagavan whether all this was possible. Bhagavan said, "Why not? Quite possible."

Roy even asked, "How could the vanquished snake know and do all this?" Bhagavan said, "Why? It was watching what the boy did to it, what the other snake did to the boy and so it ran and sucked out the poison. Snakes see and observe and can do such things. Many stories like this have been told of serpents."

2-10-46

This morning again Dilip sang a few songs before Bhagavan.

4-10-46

In the afternoon Nagamma asked that a copy of her letter to her brother, describing the first visit to Bhagavan of Princess Prabhavati with her husband after their marriage might be shown to Madhavi Amma (K.K. Nambiar's sister) now here. Thereupon, Bhagavan asked, "What is that letter? Have I heard it?" Nagamma said, "No". I said, "Then, why not read it now? We are all here (I meant Professors G.V. Subbaramayya, D.S. Sarma, K. Swaminathan) and we can all hear it." Thereupon she read out the letter. Later Bhagavan asked G.V.S. if he had seen Nagamma's song and Chinta Dikshitulu's *Nivedana* which were printed about Jubilee time. He said 'No' and thereupon Bhagavan asked T.S.R. to show him the above two pamphlets. He also asked T.S.R. to show G.V.S. the Telugu rendering of Bhagavan's four songs in connection with his mother's serious fever, made by Mr. Narasinga Rao of Nellore. G.V.S. saw the same and said, "They have not so far been translated into Telugu." In explaining the first of these Tamil songs, Bhagavan told us that in the Tamil *அலையாய் வருபிறவி அத்தனையுமாற்ற மலையாய்* etc., we can have either *மாற்ற* or *ஆற்ற* as we like when splitting the *sandhi*. If we take it as *மாற்ற*, it would mean "To change the countless waves of births and deaths, Arunachala rises as a mountain in the middle of the waves". If we take it as *ஆற்ற*, it would mean "To cure or heal the disease of countless births, the Arunachala Hill has risen as a medicine."

In the evening after *parayana*, Dilip again sang a few songs from Ganapati Sastri's *Forty Verses on Bhagavan*. About seven, he stopped singing. Mrs. T. told Bhagavan, "He has composed three songs on Bhagavan's smile. They are very good," and requested D. to sing them. But he excused himself, saying, "They are in Bengali". A few minutes later, I went and told him, "We generally have Tamil *parayana* between seven and seven-thirty. Today, we have cancelled that item and made that interval available for your songs. So, unless you find it inconvenient for you to sing any more, please sing one or two songs more." D. said "Is that so?" and then gave us two more songs, one on Devi and one on Siva. He told Bhagavan he was leaving the next morning and that he had great peace during his stay here.

This evening, D.S. Sarma, asked Bhagavan: "In Western mysticism three definite stages are often spoken of — *viz*., Purgation, illumination and union. Was there any such stage as purgation — corresponding to what we call *sadhana* — in Bhagavan's life?" Bhagavan replied, "I have never done any *sadhana*. I did not even know what *sadhana* was. Only long afterwards I came to know what *sadhana* was and how many different kinds of it there were. It is only if there was any object or anything different from me that I could think of it. Only if there was a goal to attain, I should have made *sadhana* to attain that goal. There was nothing which I wanted to obtain. I am now sitting with my eyes open. I was then sitting with my eyes closed. That was all the difference. I was not doing any *sadhana* even then. As I sat with my eyes closed, people said I was in *samadhi*. As I was not talking, they said I was in *mauna*. The fact is, I did nothing. Some Higher Power took hold of me and I was entirely in Its hand." Bhagavan further added, "The books no doubt speak of *sravana, manana, nididhyasana, samadhi* and *sakshatkara*. We are always *sakshat* and what is there for one to attain *karam* of that? We call this world *sakshat* or *pratyaksha*. What is changing, what appears and disappears, what is not *sakshat*, we

regard as *sakshat*. We are always and nothing can be more directly present *pratyaksha* than we, and about that we say we have to attain *sakshatkaram* after all these *sadhanas*. Nothing can be more strange than this. The Self is not attained by doing anything, but remaining still and being as we are."

5-10-46

This morning a person came and prostrated himself before Bhagavan at the dining hall. He almost touched him, and as I was wondering who it could be, the person announced himself to Bhagavan as Vasu and Bhagavan said, "Is it you? If you had not said it, I should never have recognised you. You have gone down so much." The visitor replied, "I find I must say the same about Bhagavan." To this Bhagavan said, "Why, what is the matter with me? Probably because you are reduced, your eyesight has also become reduced and I appear reduced to you!" Later, in the hall, Bhagavan introduced this gentleman to all present and said, "This is the Vasu who caught hold of me when returning from an oil bath one hot day to Skandasramam and I had that experience of what seemed like utter collapse with even the heartbeat stopping." Then Vasudeva Sastri said, "I was then too young. I did not even know that it was death. But because Palaniswami started crying, I thought it was death and I caught hold of Bhagavan and I was trembling with grief." Bhagavan said here, "I could even in that state clearly see his trembling and emotion." V. added that, after Bhagavan recovered, he told V. and Palani, "What? You thought I died? Did you believe I would die even without telling you?"

Bhagavan also said, "We were in Virupakshi Cave and when a tiger came that way one night, this is the person who hastily ran into the cave leaving us in the verandah, shut the door and then cried to the tiger, 'Come on now. What can you do?'" V. said, "Once Bhagavan and I went round the Hill during the Skandasramam days. When we reached near Easanya Mutt

about 8-30 a.m., Bhagavan sat on a rock and said with tears in his eyes he would never again come to the Asramam and would go where he pleased and live in the forests or caves away from all men. I would not leave him and he would not come. It became very late. We went there about 8 or 8-30 a.m. and even when it became 1 p.m. we were still in this deadlock. Bhagavan asked me to go into the town and eat my food and then come back if I wanted. But I was afraid that if I went Bhagavan would go away somewhere. Meanwhile, the Swami of Easanya Mutt very unexpectedly came that way. Ordinarily it could not be expected he would have come there at that time at all. But strange to say, he came that way and he persuaded Bhagavan to go with him to Easanya Mutt. I left Bhagavan there and ran up to the town for my food and came back swiftly, fearing that Bhagavan might have left. But I found him there and we both came to Skandasramam afterwards."

When this was mentioned, Bhagavan said, "Another time too I wanted to run away from all this crowd and live somewhere unknown, freely as I liked. That was when I was in Virupakshi Cave. I felt my being there was an inconvenience and hardship to Jadaswami and some other swamis there. But on that occasion my plans were frustrated by Yogananda Swami. I tried to be free on a third occasion also. That was after mother's passing away. I did not want to have even an Asramam like Skandasramam and the people that were coming there then. But the result has been this Asramam and all the crowd here. Thus all my three attempts failed."

In another connection also Bhagavan mentioned this Vasudeva Sastri today. Mr. G.V.S. read out a Telugu stanza composed by him on celebration of birthdays (yesterday was G.V.S.'s birthday, it seems). When this was read out, Bhagavan said, "It is this Vasu and others that wanted to celebrate my birthday first in 1912. I was quite opposed to it. But Vasu pleaded with me: 'It is for us and so Bhagavan should not object' and they celebrated it that year for the first time."

In the afternoon, Sundaresa Iyer's grandson (about a month old) was brought by Mr. Narayanaswami Aiyar into the hall to Bhagavan, his daughter following behind. Bhagavan took the child into his hands, when it was offered by N. Aiyar and said, "I was wondering whether you were bringing some doll. He is looking at me and smiling." After holding the child, Bhagavan was about to return him to N. Aiyar, when his daughter ran up to Bhagavan and, showing a red mark on the child's abdomen, said, "There is this red mark on the child. Further he had *Brahma mudi* (literally, knot of Brahma) at the time of his birth." Bhagavan looked at the birthmark and then returned the child. The girl continued and said, "We don't know whether this mark and that knot are good. Mother asked me to ask Bhagavan. Are they good?" Bhagavan was pleased to say, "All is only good" (*எல்லாம் நல்லது தான்*). I consider these people extremely lucky and I believe all will be well with this child in his life. Bhagavan further remarked, after the child was returned and was seated on his grandmother's lap, "It is to attain the state of this babe that all *yoga* is performed. This babe, what thoughts has it now. It does not even blink its eyes." Then the child's mother began singing M.V.R.'s *Saranagati* song. Bhagavan turning to G.V.S. said, "Do you know what happened to this girl? She was living at Cawnpore on the second or third floor and, though there was a tap, it seems water would not flow up there. But she turned the tap and sang this song and then water flowed, it seems. That is a *siddhi*. When the father went to her, she said, 'I will show you a miracle' and repeated the performance before him."

When the birthmark was shown and there was talk about it, Bhagavan said, "I too have a red mark on the sole of my right foot. But the mark on this child's abdomen is big." Then T.S.R. said, "Mr. Ramaswamy Iyer has sung that Bhagavan's feet had become red on account of the burning tears shed at His feet by devotees and another writer has described the red mark as the anklet (*pada chilambu*) mark of Nataraja."

Vasudeva Sastri recounted another incident, which he had seen:

"One day, when we were at Skandasramam, I was aghast to find a scorpion climbing up over Bhagavan's body in the front and another at the same time climbing down his back. I was terrified and wanted to do something. But Bhagavan remained calm, as if nothing happened, and the two scorpions, after crawling over his body as if over a wall, eventually left him. After they left, Bhagavan explained to us, 'They crawl over you just as they would crawl on the floor or a wall or tree. Do they crawl over these, stinging as they go? It is only because you fear them and do something that they fear you and do something in return'."

6-10-46

This afternoon Bhagavan spoke of his days at Pachaiamman Koil, when he had to remind the office to send a reply to a relation of Rangachari (who used to go to Bhagavan daily in those days, and remained with him, during the plague scare, at the above Pachaiamman Koil). Bhagavan said, "On account of plague, the whole town was completely evacuated for six months. There was a staff of about two hundred people who went on daily disinfecting house after house and they lived in two camps, one of about one hundred and fifty near Chetti Kolam Koil and another of fifty at the other end of the town. I stayed at Pachaiamman Koil, with two or three others. The disinfecting staff used to go to me frequently. They said they were going to organise a *bhajana* at the end of their stay and that I should attend it. I did not say I would not go, thinking their proposed *bhajana* might not come off at all. But one night, suddenly, a party of thirty or forty people with torches in their hands came up to us, after we had gone to sleep, and woke us up. I asked, 'What is the matter?' Then they revealed that the *bhajana* had been arranged, that everything was ready and that I should go with them. I could not say 'No' when so

many of them came like that, and so I went. They had made elaborate arrangements. So many lights, so many eatables, so many garlands and musicians of repute sent for from various places. They had arranged a seat for me and another platform for those who were to do *bhajana*. They garlanded me. All the people in the town were there. All the benches and chairs also were there. Several of the people assembled there were also drunk and so they were all in high spirits. I remained with them for some time and then took leave and came away. Some of them again came back with me with their torches and left me at Pachaiamman Koil and returned."

T.S.R. then asked, "It seems Bhagavan once had a dream and saw so many *siddhas* assembled before him, that they looked all familiar to him and that he sat there on a dais with *chinmudra*." Bhagavan replied, "Is that the only thing? I have seen several such visions. What am I to say?" He continued, "Once I came across a *sunai* (spring in a cave); I went towards it. As I approached, it was getting wider, and there were trees on either side. It became broader and broader. There was good light and the passage led to a big tank. In the middle of the tank was a temple." I asked, "This was not a dream?" Bhagavan said, "Whether it was a dream or *jagrat* (waking), call it what you like." (Somasundaram Pillai says the words Bhagavan used were *கனவோ, காட்சியோ*). Bhagavan also recounted that after he came here, within the last six years or so, he saw huge streets, lined with imposing houses on either side leading to the Asramam; that Chadwick and others were following him in that dream, and Bhagavan asked Chadwick, "Can anyone call all this a dream?" and that Chadwick replied, "Which fool will call all this a dream?" At that stage, he woke up. When Bhagavan distinctly calls this a dream and the previous experience he leaves to others to call, dream or waking, I am led to believe that the other vision of the tank and temple was in the waking or some other stage, which was not dream.

Mr. T.V. Krishnaswami Aiyer asked, "Were Bhagavan's brother and others aware of Bhagavan's absorption in the Self and indifference to external things?" Bhagavan said, "Yes. They could not but be aware. For though I tried my best to appear as if I was attending to external affairs, I could not succeed fully in the attempt. I would sit down to read like others, open a book, pretend to read it and after some time turn the page. Similarly, after some time I would take up another book. But all knew that my attitude had changed. They used to make fun of me for this abstraction of mine. I never took offence, as I was totally indifferent to their taunts. This encouraged them to go on with their mockery. If I was so minded, I could have silenced them all with one blow. But I did not care at all. After the 'death' experience I was living in a different world. How could I turn my attention to books? Before that, I would at least attend to what the other boys repeated and repeat the same myself. But afterwards, I could not do even that. At school, my mind would not dwell on study at all. I would be imagining and expecting God would suddenly drop down from Heaven before me."

Someone asked Bhagavan whether he deliberately went in for a study of *Periapuranam*. Thereupon Bhagavan said, "No. No. It was a mere accident. A relation of mine, my uncle, was given the book by a swami who was living near our house and was advised to read it. Thus the book happened to be in our house and, coming across it, I looked into it first out of curiosity and then, becoming interested, read the whole book. It made a great impression on me. Before that, the sixty-three images of the Nayanars in the temple were mere images and no more. But afterwards, they gained new significance for me. I used to go and weep before those images and before Nataraja that God should give me the same grace He gave to those saints. But this was after the 'death' experience. Before that, the *bhakti* for the sixty-three saints lay dormant, as it were." Mr. Somasundaram Pillai asked Bhagavan, "With what *bhava* did Bhagavan cry

before those images? Did Bhagavan pray he should have no further birth, or what?" Bhagavan replied, "What *bhava*? I only wanted the same grace as was shown to those saints. I prayed I should have the same *bhakti* that they had. I knew nothing of freedom from births or bondage."

8-10-46

This afternoon, a visitor asked Bhagavan, "No doubt the method taught by Bhagavan is direct. But it is so difficult. We do not know how to begin it. If we go on asking, 'Who am I?' 'Who am I?' like a *japa*, with 'Who am I?' for *mantra*, it becomes dull. In other methods, there is something preliminary and positive with which one can begin and then go step by step. But in Bhagavan's method, there is no such thing, and to seek the Self at once, though direct, is difficult."

Bhagavan: You yourself concede, it is the direct method. It is the direct and easy method. When going after other things, alien to us, is so easy, how can it be difficult for one to go to one's own Self? You talk of 'Where to begin'. There is no beginning and no end. You are yourself the beginning and the end. If you are here and the Self somewhere else, and you have to reach that Self, you may be told how to start, how to travel and then how to reach. Suppose you who are now in Ramana Asramam ask, 'I want to go to Ramana Asramam. How shall I start and how to reach it?', what is one to say? A man's search for the Self is like that. He is always the Self and nothing else. You say 'Who am I?' becomes a *japa*. It is not meant that you should go on asking 'Who am I?' In that case, thought will not so easily die. All *japas* are intended, by the use of one thought, the *mantra*, to exclude all other thoughts. This, *japa* eventually does for a man. All other thoughts, except the thought of the *mantra*, gradually die and then even that one thought dies. Our Self is of the nature of *japa*. *Japa* is always going on there. If we give up all thoughts, we shall find *japa* is always there

without any effort on our part. In the direct method, as you call it, by saying ask yourself 'Who am I?' you are told to concentrate within yourself where the I-thought (the root of all other thoughts) arises. As the Self is not outside but inside you, you are asked to dive within, instead of going without, and what can be more easy than going to yourself? But the fact remains that to some this method will seem difficult and will not appeal. That is why so many different methods have been taught. Each of them will appeal to some as the best and easiest. That is according to their *pakva* or fitness. But to some, nothing except the *vichara marga* will appeal. They will ask, 'You want me to know or to see this or that. But who is the knower, the seer?' Whatever other method may be chosen, there will be always a doer. That cannot be escaped. Who is that doer must be found out. Till that, the *sadhana* cannot be ended. So eventually, all must come to find out 'Who am I?'. You complain that there is nothing preliminary or positive to start with. You have the 'I' to start with. You know you exist always, whereas the body does not exist always, *e.g.*, in sleep. Sleep reveals that you exist even without a body. We identify the 'I' with a body, we regard the Self as having a body, and as having limits, and hence all our trouble. All that we have to do is to give up identifying our Self with the body, with forms and limits, and then we shall know ourselves as the Self that we always are.

The visitor further asked, "May I believe that there is nothing more to be known now, so far as the technique of *sadhana* is concerned, than that which has been written in your books from time to time? This question arises from the fact that, in all other systems of *sadhana*, the *sadguru* unfolds some secret technique of meditation to his disciple at the time of initiation or *diksha*, as it is called."

Bhagavan: There is nothing more to be known than what you find in books. No secret technique. It is all an open secret, in this system.

Visitor: If, even after God-realisation, one has to pay attention to his bodily needs such as hunger, sleep, rest, heat and cold, of what use is Self-realisation? This state is something, which cannot be called completeness.

Bhagavan: What will be the state after Self-realisation? Why should you bother about it now? Attain Self-realisation, and then see for yourself. But why go to the state of Self-realisation? Even now, are you without Self? And are all these things, eating, sleeping, etc., without or apart from the Self?

9-10-46

This morning, Nagamma read out her Telugu account of the Jubilee celebrations which appeared in the journal *Navodaya*. Last evening a European lady and gentleman arrived here, with an introduction to Bhagavan from Mr. D.S. Sastri. About 2-30 p.m. today, the lady came and sat in the hall along with other ladies and had her legs stretched out in front of her and opposite Bhagavan. T.S.R. went to her and quietly told her that it was not quite good form here to sit like that before Bhagavan; and she folded her legs. Bhagavan was greatly annoyed at this and rebuked T.S.R. saying, "Why this mischief (சேஷ்டை)? It is difficult for them to squat at all on the floor like us. Why should you make it more difficult by imposing further restrictions?" After saying this, Bhagavan added, "Now, my conscience pricks me that I am having my legs stretched out in front of all." So saying, he drew in his legs, folded them and kept on like that till 4-45, when he rose as usual.

10-10-46

This morning, after his usual stroll, Bhagavan arrived in the hall about 7-35 and, sitting on the couch, stretched out his legs. But immediately, he drew them back and folded them saying, "I am forgetting," recounted yesterday's incident, and

ended, "My conscience pricks me. I cannot keep my legs stretched out in front of all." Still he kept his legs folded. In the afternoon too, he had not forgotten this and was trying to keep to this new resolve of his. But before the evening he relaxed a bit, as all of us entreated him that it should be given up.

This afternoon, Mr. Subba Rao said that some incidents in Bhagavan's life had not at all been recorded in any book so far; for instance, he said, nobody knew that Bhagavan was for some time nude, but he found out by reading Bhagavan's horoscope that he must have been nude for some time. It was then discovered in the Telugu biography the above fact about Bhagavan was mentioned. This led Bhagavan to say, "It is true I was nude for some time in the early days, when I was under the *illuppai* tree in the Temple compound. It was not because I had a *vairagya* that I should have no clothing of any sort. The cod-piece I was wearing used to bring on sores where it touched the skin. When the sore became bad, I threw away the cod-piece. That is all. There used to be an old Gurukkal who for the first time arranged for some regular food for me either by supplying some from his house or by sending the *abhisheka* milk from the temple to me. After I had been nude for about a month, this old Gurukkal told me one day, 'Boy, the Kartigai Deepam is approaching. People from all the 24 districts will be flocking here. Police from all the districts will also be here. They will arrest you and put you into jail if you are nude like this. So you must have a cod-piece.' So saying, he got a new piece of cloth, made four people lift me up and tied a cod-piece round me."

Bhagavan also related today that on the morning of the day after his arrival he had his first meal at Tiruvannamalai. Apparently, he ate nothing at all on the first day. He said, "The next day I was walking up and down in the sixteen-pillared *mantapam* in front of the Temple. Then a Mauni Swami who used to be living in the old days in the Kambathu Ilaiyanar Temple

came there from the Temple. Another Palni Swami, a well-built man with long matted hair who used to do a lot of service, by clearing and cleaning the Temple precincts with the help of a band of *sannyasis*, also came to the sixteen-pillared *mantapam* from the town. Then the Mauni looking at me, a stranger here, being in a hungry and exhausted condition, made signs to the above Palaniswami that I should be given some food. Thereupon the above Palaniswami went and brought some cold rice in a tin vessel which was all black, with a little salt strewn on top of the rice. That was the first *bhiksha* which Arunachaleswara gave me!"

11-10-46

This afternoon, I made Nagamma read out to us all in the hall her account of what Bhagavan had said in reply to Prof. D.S. Sarma's questions on 4-10-46. Mr. Sarma had also sent an account himself of his talk with Bhagavan. We had that also read out. On comparison, I found that what I had already recorded in these pages needed few alterations. Nagamma has recorded all that took place then, including questions which others besides Mr. Sarma put and the answers Bhagavan gave them. In this connection, Bhagavan recollected that he had in answering Sarma quoted "*abhyasakale sahajam sthitim prahurupasanam"* (*Ramana Gita*). (What is *sahaja* state is known as *upasana* during practice). Bhagavan again repeated much of what he told Prof. Sarma and said, "What is obvious, self-evident and most immediate to us, the Self, we say we are not able to see. On the other hand, we say that what we see with these eyes alone is *pratyaksha* (direct perception). There must first be the seer before anything could be seen. You are yourself the eye that sees. Yet, you say you don't know the eye that sees, but know only the things seen. But for the Self, the Infinite Eye (*அந்தமிலாக்கண்*), referred to in the stanza in *Ulladu Narpadu* (*Reality in Forty Verses*), what can be seen? You want *sakshatkaram*. You are now doing *karam* of all these

things, *i.e*., real-ising these things, regarding as real all these things, making real what is not real. If this *karam* is given up out of your present *sakshatkaram* of the unreal, then what will remain is that which is real or *sakshat*."

This evening, the Polish lady, Uma Devi, arrived with a party of 25 Polish people, mostly girls, from the Kolhapur State, where there is a refugee camp of about 5,000 Poles.

12-10-46

This afternoon the Polish party entertained Bhagavan with their folk-songs and folk dances.

14-10-46

This morning I told Bhagavan, "Last night, as desired by Uma Devi, I took some of the Polish party round the Hill and on the way explained to them the tradition about the Hill and the various gods of our religion. They said 'How many gods? How can there be so many gods?' Though I explained to them that the same God is worshipped in various aspects, etc., they said they could not understand it all." Thereupon, Bhagavan suggested that they should peruse the book *All is One* which had been translated into English and asked me to find out if typed copies of the English translation were available for being given to them. I brought three copies from the Mauni. Bhagavan gave one to Uma Devi, one to the girls of the party and had the third in his hands. Meanwhile Mr. T.K.S. came there and asked for the third copy and Bhagavan gave it to him. Uma Devi said that she had finished her Polish translation of the *Gita* and that only her introduction and Sir Radhakrishnan's foreword had to be written before the book could be sent to the press.

15-10-46

This morning the Polish party left. This evening Dr. B.K. Roy who has been staying in Ramana Nagar for about a month

or more and visiting the Asramam, told Bhagavan that, as desired, he had gone through Zimmer's book, and found that the translation the Asramam had already of a portion of the book was quite good and that he could not improve it, and that the rest of the book contained nothing original of Zimmer but was only a translation of Bhagavan's works. (This Dr. Roy seems to be a Bengali writer, well-read in English and other languages. He is a Doctor of Philosophy who has stayed long in Germany, Switzerland and other places).

16-10-46

This night, the above Dr. Roy took leave of Bhagavan, saying he was leaving the following morning. Mrs. Taleyarkhan also told Bhagavan that one Miss Boman, a Swiss lady who has been here for the last three days, would be leaving tomorrow, and Miss B. made her *namaskarams* and left. (This Miss B., it seems, has been in India for about eight years, at the head of the Baroda palace staff of servants. It seems she does not believe in God, but believes in social service. She has come here having heard of Bhagavan from Mrs. T. when the Maharani of Baroda was staying at Ooty last summer and Miss B. was in the Rani's party. Before coming here she wrote to Mrs. T. "I am coming to see your God and hope I can make him mine too", (or words to that effect).

This night, another Dr. Roy, a blind gentleman, arrived here from Sri Aurobindo Ashram, where it seems Dilip Kumar Roy advised him to come here. It seems he went blind in his seventh year, but has managed, in spite of it, to educate himself so well that till recently he was a lecturer in Calcutta University and is now a lecturer in the Tata Sociological Institute at Bombay. He has married an American wife and, from the picture he has been kind enough to show me and some others here, she is a beautiful woman. He is a very remarkable person. He has travelled all alone from Bombay now. But this is nothing. He

has travelled to America, Japan and other places all alone. When we complimented him on all he has been able to achieve, he says it is nothing compared to what Helen Keller, who lost all her senses at 18 months, has been able to achieve for herself.

This gentleman had a private talk with Bhagavan after 8 p.m. today, when he narrated his eye-trouble and prayed for Bhagavan's mercy.

17-10-46

This morning Dr. Roy showed before Bhagavan how he writes, reads, reads his watch, etc. I have learnt he is a M.A., B.L., of Calcutta University and afterwards became a Ph.D. of an American University. In the afternoon, when I entered the hall about 3 p.m., Dr. Roy was asking Bhagavan, "In the case of persons who are not capable of long meditation, will it not be enough if they engage themselves in doing good to others?" Bhagavan replied, "Yes, it will do. The idea of good will be at their heart. That is enough. Good, God, Love, are all the same thing. If the person keeps continuously thinking of anyone of these, it will be enough. All meditation is for the purpose of keeping out all other thoughts." After some pause, Bhagavan said, "When one realises the Truth and knows that there is neither the seer nor the seen, but only the Self that transcends both, that the Self alone is the screen or the substratum on which the shadow both of the ego and all that it sees, come and go, the feeling that one has not got eyesight, and that therefore one misses the sight of various things, will vanish. The realised being, though he has normal eyesight, does not see all these things." (He sees only the Self and nothing but the Self).

After further discussion with Dr. Roy, Bhagavan added, "There is nothing wrong in seeing anything, this body or the world. The mistake lies in thinking you are the body. There is no harm in thinking the body is in you. The body, world, all

must be in the Self; or rather nothing can exist apart from the Self, as no pictures can be seen without the screen on which the shadows can be cast." In answer to a question as to what is the best way to the goal, Bhagavan said, "There is no goal to be reached. There is nothing to be attained. You are the Self. You exist always. Nothing more can be predicated of the Self than that it exists. Seeing God or the Self is only being the Self or yourself. Seeing is being. You, being the Self, want to know how to attain the Self. It is something like a man being at Ramanasramam asking how many ways are there to reach Ramanasramam and which is the best way for him. All that is required of you is to give up the thought that you are this body and to give up all thoughts of the external things or the not-Self. As often as the mind goes out towards outward objects, prevent it and fix it in the Self or 'I'. That is all the effort required on your part. The different methods prescribed by different thinkers are all agreed on this. The *Advaita, Dvaita, Visishtadvaita* schools and other schools all agree that the mind must give up thinking of external things and must think of the Self, or God as they may call it. That is called meditation. But meditation being our nature, you will find when you realise the Self that what was once the means is now the goal, that while once you had to make an effort, now you cannot get away from the Self even if you want."

18-10-46

This afternoon a visitor from Shimoga asked Bhagavan, "How to still the tossing mind?" Bhagavan replied, "Who asks this question? Is it the mind or you?" The visitor said, "The mind."

Bhagavan: If you see what this mind is, it will be stilled.

Visitor: How to see what the mind is?

Bhagavan: What is your idea of the mind?

Visitor: My idea is, it is thought.

Bhagavan: The mind is a bundle of thoughts. But the source of all thoughts is the I-thought. So if you try to find out who this 'I' is, the mind will disappear. The mind will exist only so long as you think of external things. But when you draw it from external things and make it think of the mind or 'I' — in other words introvert it — it ceases to exist.

25-10-46

For the last three or four days, Mr. Subba Rao has been reading out in the hall his *Life of Bhagavan* in Telugu. He has mentioned various new things in this book. One is, that the mongoose which came to Bhagavan when he was on the Hill was golden-coloured. S. also says that Nayana had told him that the mongoose was none other than God Arunachala come to see Bhagavan. Another thing I have not recorded before is found in this *Life* by S. It seems Nayana used to say that dogs cannot long survive contact with a person like Bhagavan whose *granthi* (knot) has been sundered; and that he used to drive away all dogs. In this connection, Bhagavan said, "Yes, he used to drive the dogs away. But there was an exception. It was a dog we used to call Neela. She used to come and always sit on my lap. But she would not allow any other dog, even her own mother or sisters and brothers, to pass beyond the gate of the Skandasramam. Nayana used to say, 'This has been born a dog by mistake'."

S. has also recorded that whatever Nayana said always came true, and cited an event in his own life to prove this.

26-10-46

The morning *tapal* had brought a letter signed Kannan. Bhagavan read the letter but was not sure who wrote it. In the afternoon, he sent for the cover in which it came and from various facts made sure the writer was Mr. Krishnamurti of Madura College, son of Mr. Ranganatha Aiyer. At

Bhagavan's suggestion, Viswanath added to a letter that was being sent today to Mr. Ranganatha Iyer, "Tell Mr. Krishnamurti that the 'Kannan' who escaped detection this morning when the *tapals* were read was discovered this evening and brought into publicity."

The following is the English translation of Kannan's letter as made by Mr. T.P.R, and myself the next day:

"Oh Emperor Supreme, Ramana, who rules the world under the canopy of universal sovereignty, seated on the throne of the Heart! That day you graciously said: 'Oh child, you being our beloved son, we bestow kingship on you. Assuming this sovereignty, be you happy!'

"I am seated in the audience hall. There have gathered the Prime Minister, mind, the assistant ministers, *viz*., the five sense organs, and the heads of executive authority, *viz*., five organs of action. Before me, they are making noise as they please. They daringly defy my authority. Often and suddenly, they darken the audience hall. If I say, 'Enough. Leave me alone, all of you, and get away', they are indulging in obstructive tactics and say that they will not go. I am having endless trouble. Enough for me, this kingship devoid of power. I have surrendered this kingship unto the Lotus Feet of Ramana who is my father and Master.

"Bhagavan should release me and give his gracious protection or else teach me the secret of sovereignty, granting the necessary power.

"Oh King, Refuge, Refuge, Refuge I-crave.

Kannan.

"You gave me refuge, saying, 'Child, when the bell of extroversion rings, the assembly will gather. In the audience

hall, be ever raising the incense of *vichara* or enquiry. Mind, the minister, is a drunkard. Confusing himself with the intoxication of thought, he will keep confusing the assembly as well. This incense of *vichara* will clear the intoxication of thought. The assembly will function in order. As this incense of *vichara* increases more and more, those assembled will take leave. When the bell of 'abidance' rings, mind will finally disappear. All that incense of *vichara* transformed into light, you will abide as yourself, alone and blessed.

" 'Therefore, you should not give up even for a moment this 'Self-Enquiry' of 'Who am I?' With the progressive increase of *vichara*, *jagrat* and *swapna* will merge in *sahaja nirvikalpa samadhi*. All sleep will become *kevala nirvikalpa samadhi*. The *vichara* will merge in *swarupa*.' "

Prayer

"Ramana, my mother and father, you gave me the sword of *jnana*, termed *vichara*. Grant to this humble self, that has sought refuge at your feet, the necessary desirelessness to lay low and destroy the demon of 'thought' as and when it arises, with determination, and without any pity or compassion.

"Lord, I surrender myself.

Kannan."

Mr. Thiagaraja Iyer, Official Receiver of Madras, who was in the hall, asked Bhagavan, "Is this all imagination, the creation of the writer's fancy, or real?" Bhagavan replied, "We don't know. How can we say anything?" Next Bhagavan asked me to read out an article entitled *Ramana's Grace* which was not in the first edition of the *Souvenir* Volume, but has been included in the second Edition, which arrived here yesterday or so. I read it out accordingly. There, the writer mentions how Bhagavan's grace made him have direct realisation and

experience of the Self or the awareness of 'I', in Bhagavan's hall for some little time, and describes it vividly and in detail. After I finished reading the article, Bhagavan remarked in answer to Mr. T. Iyer's original question, "Now, what are we to say about this? Was it all real or fancy?"

In the evening, after *parayana*, Alamelu Ammal got up and told Bhagavan that she was present at Seshadri Swami's *samadhi*, this morning when the following incident took place. She said, "The party from Coimbatore including the man who says Seshadri Swami is speaking and writing through him on a planchette came to the *samadhi* and found the place locked. They went round the *samadhi* shrine three times and meanwhile Thiruvengadam Pillai, the retired Police constable who is in charge of the shrine, came and opened the temple. Then the Coimbatore party proceeded to say that Seshadri Swami was writing on the planchette which also they had brought with them. There was some writing produced by the planchette. But T. Pillai asked the party, 'Now, tell me what S. Swami told me one day soon after he had a shave and was sitting on the pial of Gurukkal's house.' The party gave some answer. Mr. T. put another question, which was also answered. Thereupon T. remarked both the answers were wrong and that there was no necessity to ask further questions and that he could not believe S. Swami was speaking through them. The party then broke up in disorder."

Bhagavan and the Asramam had been already informed of the intended visit of this Coimbatore party. The party in fact wanted to have our Asramam as their headquarters and carry on their activities from this centre. But the Asramam had declined to allow any such thing. When originally Bhagavan heard from this party that S. Swami was speaking through them, he humorously remarked, "It seems S. Swami is speaking to them. He was well known to us and moved with us all closely. It is a pity he does not come and speak to us."

29-10-46

This morning a letter was received by Bhagavan from Mrs. Noye, Bettie and Mr. K.K. Nambiar, in which Mrs. Noye expressed joy and gratitude for K.K.N. having met her and Bettie at the suggestion of the Asramam, and described how she felt as if Bhagavan was present with her.

About 2-30 p.m. when I went near Bhagavan's hall, T.P.R was outside at the entrance, and told me Bhagavan was being given hot fomentation for some pain on his right hip and that therefore people were not allowed to go in just then. So I waited and went in along with others at about 2-55 p.m. Bhagavan felt that he had caused great inconvenience to the devotees by his attendants having kept visitors out for a few minutes and he remarked, "All these people were kept waiting for half an hour." Bhagavan occasionally gets these pains. Today, it was obvious, the pain was severe. But he made light of it and would not allow anything else to be done for it. He himself took some liniment and was occasionally rubbing it on his right hip. Seeing this, I suggested to friends that we could all clear out of the hall and leave Bhagavan to lie down if he felt like that. But Bhagavan would not allow it. A little later, Dr. Anantanarayana Rao came into the hall, and he offered to massage the part and give some relief. Bhagavan however would not have it and humorously remarked, "It is enough the matter has reached your ears. Your hands need not be employed. I am already feeling better." (This was in reference to our common belief that if we have any trouble it is enough if our complaint reaches Bhagavan's ears). Bhagavan continued to have this pain at intervals till we left the hall at 7-30 p.m.

Alamelu Ammal reported to Bhagavan that the Coimbatore party told her various people spoke to them through the planchette, including our Bhagavan, and that one Kolandai Swami of Madura, deceased, spoke through the planchette and

wrote a song on Bhagavan. So saying, she produced the song and Bhagavan perused it and gave it to T. S. R., saying, "You are the custodian of these songs. Do what you like with this."

Bhagavan remarked, "These *siddhis* won't come to us. No swami comes and speaks to us." When Alamelu Ammal said the party claimed that Bhagavan also spoke through their planchette, Bhagavan said, "Ah, is it so?"

Bhagavan showed Muruganar a cutting from some Tamil paper in which an account had been given of the celebration of Golden Jubilee at Golden Rock on 1-10-46, instead of 1-9-46 owing to the South Indian Railway strike.

30-10-46

This morning Dr. S. Rao, Anantachari and Balaram returned from their trip to Madura and Tiruchuzhi. Dr. Rao had brought with him *dosai prasad* from Alagar Koil near Madura. Bhagavan had several times told us of this *dosai*. That is why Dr. Rao was so particular about bringing it. Bhagavan partook of it with relish and spoke of the days when he used to eat it frequently. Bhagavan was kind enough to make enquiries about Karpoora Bhattar and was glad to hear that K.'s wife in full pregnancy, attended to our party's comforts, etc., and was confined just the day before Balaram left Tiruchuzhi. Balaram said the labour was easy and the child was a female one; and that the lady's mother arrived just in time to assist at the confinement. The morning *tapal* brought a letter from Victoria Doe, saying that she had met Swami Siddheswarananda in London. Curiously, the same post brought a letter from Swami S. saying that he had arrived in India and was in his native place.

1-11-46

Mrs. Taleyarkhan took a lot of pains and arranged for 'Harischandra' a Tamil film to be shown to Bhagavan in the

dining hall this night. The show could not be started before 9-30 p.m. and so Bhagavan had to keep awake till 12-30. But Bhagavan sat through it all and I believe he enjoyed it.

2-11-46

Bhagavan looked up Harischandra's story in Tamil and said, "They had abridged the story very much at one place. They did not show how Chandramathi was suspected of having killed the king's son and was sentenced to death for that supposed murder of hers." In the afternoon, Bhagavan was looking into the life of Pundarika in *Bhakta Vijayam*; the Tamil film 'Bhakta Pundarika' was going to be shown this night to him. There is a lot of difference between the story in the book and the film version.

3-11-46

This afternoon, I read out in the hall a letter received from Mr. K.K. Nambiar. Besides describing the air journey which was made at a great height with snow-capped mountains beneath them in the flight, the letter described his meeting Mrs. E. Noye and her sister, how Mrs. E.N. was greatly moved by K.K.N.'s presence, how they all meditated for a while on Bhagavan and how Mrs. E.N. shed copious tears. She was trying her best to come here again.

This night Bhagavan was shown a Hindi film 'Karna'.

4-11-46

Today a letter was received from Mrs. E. Noye, about Mr. K.K.N.'s visit to her and her sister and how they all felt that Bhagavan was actually present with them.

5-11-46

This night the film 'Mira Bai' was shown to Bhagavan.

6-11-46

As it was proposed that tonight the film 'Sivakavi' should be shown, Bhagavan took up *Pulavar Puranam* (Story of the Poets), and read out portions to us. When he came to the stanza in which it is said that the poet fell repenting at Subramanya's Feet and said, "I would not care for you. Still such was your grace that you of your own accord appeared before me, set me right and took me into your grace. How can I thank you for your mercy?" Bhagavan could hardly restrain his tears. He was choked with emotion. I have often observed how such things move him deeply.

Bhagavan is having a very bad cold. When somebody said, "Probably sitting late last night to see the film has affected Bhagavan's health," he said. "No. No. I sat there as I sit here. Part of the time, I was sleeping there. Further, they themselves give so many intervals. Whenever the reel was not moving, I closed my eyes. That gives me sufficient rest. Even if I sit for the whole night like that, it would make no difference to me."

7 to 13-11-46

Bhagavan has been having a bad cold, slight cough and fever for two or three days.

18-11-46

The following was supplied to me by Mr. G.V. Subba Rao. A visitor introduced by T.S.R. asked Bhagavan whether by doing annual ceremonies, etc., to the dead, we can confer any benefit on them. To this Bhagavan replied, "Yes. It all depends on one's belief."

Mr. Somasundaram Pillai's version of the above question and answer is given below:

Question: If such rites as the annual ceremony performed by descendants are able to do away with the karma of the

dead, it seems to strike at the root of the theory of karma. For then a man may escape the evil consequences of his bad acts through the help of the rites performed by his sons, etc.

Answer: Such rites only help the deceased to a small extent. It is on the same principle that *prayaschittam* and good deeds are said to mitigate the evil consequences of one's bad actions.

After the visitor went away I asked Bhagavan, "Till three years ago, I was under the impression that doing annual ceremonies to the dead would confer benefit on them so long as they are not reborn." Bhagavan intervened with the remark, "They will receive benefit though they are reborn several times and there is an agency to look after all this. Of course, *Jnana marga* does not say all this." After a while I said, "Bhagavan used to say that if one believes in the existence of this world, one should also believe in the existence of other worlds." Bhagavan said that it was so. I asked, "The *jnani* transcends all stages and he is not bound by any karma (*vidhi* or *nisheda*). The *ajnani* should do his own *dharma* prescribed by *sastras* till he gets *jnana*. But while he is attempting to reach *jnana*, will he be held responsible for the consequences of not doing the ordinary karma or will he be presumed to have done all this karma, just as a person reading in a higher class is presumed to have finished the lower classes?" Bhagavan said, "It depends on the superiority of the path one pursues. Unless a person has finished (in this or previous births) the other paths, he will not pursue the *jnana* path; and he need not bother himself that he has not done the various karmas prescribed by *sastras*. But he should not wilfully transgress the *sastraic* injunctions by doing things prohibited by them."

19-11-46

About 10-30 a.m. today a visitor asked Bhagavan, "The realised man has no further karma. He is not bound by his karma.

Why should he still remain with his body?" Bhagavan replied, "Who asks this question? Is it the realised man or the *ajnani*? Why should you bother what the *jnani* does or why he does anything? You look after yourself." A little later he added, "You are under the impression you are the body. So you think the *jnani* also has a body. Does the *jnani* say he has a body? He may look to you as having a body and doing things with the body, as others do. The burnt rope still looks like a rope, but it can't serve as a rope if you try to bind anything with it. So long as one identifies oneself with the body, all this is difficult to understand. That is why it is sometimes said in reply to such questions, 'The body of the *jnani* will continue till the force of *prarabdha* works itself out, and after the *prarabdha* is exhausted it will drop off. An illustration made use of in this connection is that of an arrow already discharged which will continue to advance and strike its target. But the truth is the *jnani* has transcended all karmas, including the *prarabdha* karma, and he is not bound by the body or its karmas."

The visitor also asked, "When a man realises the Self, what will he see?" Bhagavan replied, "There is no seeing. Seeing is only Being. The state of Self-realisation, as we call it, is not attaining something new or reaching some goal which is far away, but simply being that which you always are and which you always have been. All that is needed is that you give up your realisation of the not-true as true. All of us are realising, *i.e*., regarding as real, that which is not real. We have only to give up this practice on our part. Then we shall realise the Self as the Self, or in other words, 'Be the Self'. At one stage one would laugh at oneself that one tried to discover the Self which is so self-evident. So, what can we say to this question?

"That stage transcends the seer and the seen. There is no seer there to see anything. The seer who is seeing all this now ceases to exist and the Self alone remains."

23-11-46

A letter was received from Dr. Mees in which he has described all his doings and experiences at Madura and Tiruchuzhi. He says there, besides other things, "I went from the place where the river has joined the ocean (Tiruvannamalai), to the source of the river (Tiruchuzhi), past the place where the river came down as a waterfall to the level of the ocean (Madura)."

24-11-46

Mrs. Chenoy (from Bombay) asked Bhagavan this evening (after reading *Who am I?*) whether it was the proper thing to do if she asked herself "Who am I?" and told herself she was not this body but a spirit, a spark from the divine flame. Bhagavan first said, "Yes, you might do that or whatever appeals to you. It will come right in the end." But, after a little while, he told her: "There is a stage in the beginning, when you identify yourself with the body, when you are still having the body-consciousness. At that stage, you have the feeling you are different from the reality or God, and then it is, you think of yourself as a devotee of God or as a servant or lover of God. This is the first stage. The second stage is when you think of yourself as a spark of the divine fire or a ray from the divine Sun. Even then there is still that sense of difference and the body-consciousness. The third stage will come when all such difference ceases to exist, and you realise that the Self alone exists. There is an 'I' which comes and goes, and another 'I' which always exists and abides. So long as the first 'I' exists, the body-consciousness and the sense of diversity or *bheda buddhi* will persist. Only when that 'I' dies, the reality will reveal itself. For instance, in sleep, the first 'I' does not exist. You are not then conscious of a body or the world. Only when that 'I' again comes up, as soon as you get out of sleep, do you become conscious of the body and this world. But in sleep you alone existed. For, when you wake up, you are able to say 'I

slept soundly.' You, that wake up and say so, are the same that existed during sleep. You don't say that the 'I' which persisted during sleep was a different 'I' from the 'I' present in the waking state. That 'I' which persists always and does not come and go is the reality. The other 'I' which disappears in sleep is not real. One should try and realise in the waking state that state which unconsciously everyone attains in sleep, the state where the small 'I' disappears and the real 'I' alone is." At this stage, Mrs. C. Asked, "But how is it to be done?" Bhagavan replied, "By enquiring from whence and how does this small 'I' arise. The root of all *bheda buddhi* is this 'I'. It is at the root of all thoughts. If you enquire wherefrom it arises, it disappears."

Mrs. C. then asked, "Am I not then to say (in answer to my own question 'Who am I?') 'I am not this body but a spirit etc.'?" Bhagavan then said, "No. The enquiry 'Who am I?' means really the enquiry within oneself as to wherefrom within the body the 'I'-thought arises. If you concentrate your attention on such an enquiry, the 'I'-thought being the root of all other thoughts, all thoughts will be destroyed and then the Self or the Big 'I' alone will remain as ever. You do not get anything new, or reach somewhere where you were not before. When all other thoughts which were hiding the Self are removed, the Self shines by itself."

Mrs. C. then referred to the portion in the book (*Who am I ?*) where it is said, "Even if you keep on saying 'I', 'I', it will take you to the Self or reality" and asked whether that was not the proper thing to be done. I explained, "The book says one must try and follow the enquiry method which consists in turning one's thoughts inwards and trying to find out wherefrom the 'I', which is the root of all thoughts, arises. If one finds one is not able to do it, one may simply go on repeating 'I', 'I', as if it were a *mantram* like 'Krishna' or 'Rama' which people use in their *japa*. The idea is to concentrate on one thought to exclude all other thoughts and then eventually even the one thought will die." On this, Mrs. C. asked me, "Will it be of any use if

one simply repeats 'I', 'I' mechanically?" I replied, "When one uses 'I' or other words like 'Krishna', one surely has in one's own mind some idea of the God one calls by the name 'I' or anything else. When a man goes on repeating 'Rama' or 'Krishna', he can't be thinking of a tree as the meaning behind it." After all this, Bhagavan said, "Now you consider you are making an effort and uttering 'I', 'I' or other *mantrams* and making meditation. But when you reach the final stage, meditation will go on without any effort on your part. You can't get away from it or stop it, for meditation, *japa*, or whatever else you call it, is your real nature."

27-11-46

In the afternoon, when I entered the hall, Nagamma has just finished reading a Telugu article entitled *Vinnappalu* (Submissions) written by Mr. Venkatachalam (father of Souris), appearing in the Telugu journal *Andhra Silpi*. I requested Mr. G.V.S. to translate it. The gist of it was a complaint that Bhagavan, after enabling Venkatachalam to have a few experiences in the beginning, seems to have grown utterly indifferent and to have completely neglected and ignored him since. The article goes on like a loving child quarrelling with its beloved father or master, and in one portion says, "Do you think I am not aware how necessary I am for you? If I don't have you, I have all this world and its enjoyments with which I could occupy and console myself. But what can you do without the love of your devotees, as you depend solely on such love and devotion?" Some people, including Nagamma, did not like this way of writing. Mrs. Chenoy, for instance, asked, "But, why are you all making so much fuss about this silly letter?" I explained to her that others did not think the letter so silly, that, so far as I could judge, even Bhagavan did not think so, and that other devotees, long before Venkatachalam, have sometimes quarrelled with God, and even abused him for what seemed utter indifference to their urgent

supplications, that it was a passing phase in the devotee's life, who would feel remorse at the very next moment, and feel grateful to God for various mercies he has had, and so on. Bhagavan said, "It seems Venkatachalam has written another article in this vein and that Nagamma has seen it. But she has not shown it to me." He asked Nagamma, "Where is that article?" She replied, "I don't know where it is. I have thrown it away." She added that she had shown it to Mauni and that he also disapproved of it. It looks as though Nagamma and Mauni, having gone through the article, decided it was not fit to be taken to the hall for Bhagavan's perusal. But so far as I could judge, Bhagavan wants to see it.

28-11-46

This evening just before *parayana*, a Telugu gentleman wrote a few questions and presented them to Bhagavan. Bhagavan replied to him. The questions in effect were: "They say that *jivanmuktas* are always having *brahmakara vritti*. Would they be having it during sleep? If they have it, then who is it that sleeps in their case?"

Answer: "Of course, the *jivanmuktas* are having *brahmakara vritti* always, even during sleep. The real answer to the last question and the whole set of questions is that the *jnani* has neither the waking, dreaming, or sleeping *avasthas*, but only the *turiya* state. It is the *jnani* that sleeps. But he sleeps without sleeping or is awake while sleeping."

8-12-46

A French official from Pondicherry has been here for two days, and he told Bhagavan that he intended giving up his job and doing some *sadhana* in the spiritual line. As usual, Bhagavan told him it was not necessary to give up one's job or renounce the world or go to a forest, etc., to do any *sadhana*; and that, wherever one might be, and whatever duties one might be discharging in one's office or family, one could still

practise *sadhana*. (I was not present at the above conversation. But Mrs. Osborne told me about it).

25-12-46

I was away at Madras from the 13th and returned last night. This evening at about 6-30, our Framji's brother's son, who has been staying here for about a month with his wife and child, came with his party to take leave of Bhagavan, as they intended leaving for Bombay the next morning. Mother and son stood near Bhagavan's feet, and T. S. R. told Bhagavan that the party had come to take leave. The child about three years old went up to Bhagavan, and stood near him close to the grating. Bhagavan graciously took hold of the boy's right arm and shook it and let him go. He went back to his mother and, as they were prostrating, said something to her in Gujarati. Bhagavan asked what it was all about. The mother said, "He is saying Bhagavan did not place his hands on his head and bless him." Bhagavan was surprised at this remark of the child. The mother took advantage of the situation, and told her son to go near Bhagavan. Bhagavan began saying, "I have touched his arm. It is enough." But the child had come up to him and put his head across the grating. Bhagavan touched his head and remarked, "I thought he would be satisfied with my having touched and fondled him. But he persists and wants this."

26-12-46

This afternoon, Colombo Ramachandra put into my hands an article in English, which he had been preparing for the last two or three days, as suggested by our Mauni, to be sent in response to a request for an article from the assistant editor, *Hindu Organ* (English) and *Indu Sadhanam* (Tamil) and asked me to show it to Bhagavan for approval. I showed the article to Bhagavan. But as I found he was not inclined to go through the long article, I offered to read it out to him, and he heartily

approved of the idea, saying, "Yes. Others also can hear it then." Thereupon I read it out. As requested by R., I also gave for Bhagavan's perusal the above letter from the assistant editor, as it contained some personal matter meant apparently for Bhagavan's notice and seeking relief through Bhagavan's grace. I also told Bhagavan that, while the above article was to be sent to the *Hindu Organ*, Uma's Tamil article on Bhagavan written at the time of the Golden Jubilee in September this year, but so far not published, was going to be sent by R. to the *Indu Sadhanam*. Uma has written a new poem for the *Jayanti* on the 7th January and this is also going to be sent to *Indu Sadhanam*.

27-12-46

This night, a gentleman quoting a few stanzas from Tamil works like *Thiruppugazh*, and those of Thayumanavar and Manikkavachakar, wanted to know, whether, as he had been told by a certain teacher of his in interpreting these passages, the proper way to attain salvation was to see to it that the body did not die, drop off from the '*உயிர்*' (life) and get destroyed, but that it gradually became less and less and finally vanished merging into the Supreme. The gentleman prefaced his remarks with the submission that he was without eye, *i.e.*, understanding "*நயனங்களற்றதோர் ஊர் ஏறுபோலவே*" (*i.e.*, like a bull roaming about without eyes) and that he prayed for enlightenment.

Bhagavan asked him, "Have you not got eyes?" He replied, "I want the eye which would enable me to see what is the body and what is the soul."

Bhagavan: You say this. You have a body and you say 'my body', etc. How do you see all this?

Visitor: With the fleshy eye (*oonakkan*). I lead the life of egoism.

Bhagavan: Exactly. So, to see wherefrom this *ahamkara* rises and to go back to its source is the only way. You wanted the

way. This is the only way, to go back by the same way by which you came. You said பெரியோர் போனவழி (the way which the great ones of old trod). They all used only this way. Because you asked 'Which way?', I replied 'The way by which you came'.

The visitor still pointed out that his teacher, basing himself on various texts from the above authors, had taught him that the proper yoga is to see that the body does not die.

Bhagavan: People put various interpretations on the same texts, according to their pet theories. You quote for instance from Manikkavachakar and say he used the way advocated by your teacher, the way in which the soul உயிர் is to be made to leave the body by the tenth gate (and not by the nine gates). Can you point out a single line in that saint's works where the phrase (tenth gate) occurs? You said the great ones used this yoga. What is the *viyoga* (separation) from? Who got that *viyoga*, and who wants to achieve yoga (union) again? That must first be known.

The visitor also asked in the course of his long talk: "How else is the *jiva* (individual soul) to join *sivam* (God), how is the *jivatman* to become one with the *Paramatman*?" Bhagavan said, "We do not know anything about Siva or the *Paramatman*. We know the *jiva*. Or, rather, we know we exist. 'I am' is the only thing that always abides, even when the body does not exist for us, as for instance, when we are asleep. Let us take hold of this, and see wherefrom the 'I' sense or *ahamkara*, as you put it, arises."

The visitor asked Bhagavan, "I am asked to go the way by which I came. Then what will happen?" Bhagavan replied, "If you go, you go away. That is all. There is nothing more. You won't come back. Because you asked 'which way?', I said 'The way you came'. But who are you? Where are you now and where do you want to go, that one may show the way? All these questions will have to be first answered. So the most important thing is to find out who you are. Then all else will be solved."

Mr. T.S.R. found in the visitor's hands a book by his master Thirunagalinga Swami, entitled '*ஆத்ம ரக்ஷாமிர்த ஆதாரக் கட்டளை*' and having looked at it for a minute, passed it on to Bhagavan. Bhagavan glanced at its contents for a few minutes, and then returned it. He said, "There has been a school like that which went about saying that he who left his body behind could not be a *jnani* or a perfected being. But all those who said so have also left their body behind at death." The visitor, however, still said, "I prefer to believe literally what is said of a saint like Sundaramurti, that he did not leave his body behind but went on the white elephant sent from heaven for taking him there."

The above is only a poor attempt to give the gist of a long talk between the visitor and Bhagavan.

This evening, another visitor, a young and bright-looking man, Girish Ganapat, read out a long prayer to Bhagavan, which he had composed in English, consisting of about twenty stanzas, and then gave it to Bhagavan. Bhagavan received the same very graciously, after listening to it with appreciative smiles all along. I extract below five out of the above stanzas.

"In search of Truth I wandered;
But found nothing but confusion,
With hopeful eyes, I arrived here,
Expecting light, to avoid illusion.

"Came I and sat at your feet,
Peace and calmness captured self.
In an unseen way, O Lord,
You helped me in your wondrous silence.

"Light of hope cheered me,
I saw my dream succeed,
Oh, see with the sword of stillness
Are cut the veils of darkness.

"Yet, O Lord, my sinful soul
Is not free from old habits.
Hence the help from you, Guru.
Begging I am with eager eyes.

"So will you not help me, O Lord?
Will my childish prayer reach
Thy ear, O merciful Ramana?
And will my veils mysterious drop
By your single ray serene?"

The above young man took a copy of Colombo Ramachandra's article (see under date 26-12-46) and said he was going to make a translation of it into Gujerati and get it published in a Gujerati paper.

31-12-46

A visitor asked Bhagavan, "What is the right conception of life?"

Bhagavan: If you know who wants to have this cleared, *i.e*., who puts this question, then all will be solved. What is meant by life, by right conception, and who are you?

Visitor: I am a man. I want to know what is the right conception of life so that I may live accordingly.

Bhagavan: Life of man is what is. That which is, is. All the trouble arises by having a conception of it. Mind comes in. It has a conception. All trouble follows. If you are as you are, without a mind and its conceptions about various things, all will be well with you. If you seek the source of the mind, then alone all questions will be solved.

Another visitor asked Bhagavan, "Will not right conduct be enough to secure salvation?"

Bhagavan: Salvation for whom? Who wants salvation? And what is right conduct? What is conduct? And what is right?

Who is to judge what is right and what is wrong? According to previous *samskaras*, each one regards something or other as right. It is only when the reality is known, what is right can be known. The best course is to find out who wants this salvation, and in tracing this 'who' or ego to its original source consists all right conduct.

This answer did not satisfy the visitor, and he kept on asking whether doing *nitya karmas* and *sat karmas* will not lead to salvation, as mentioned in books. Thereupon Bhagavan said, "It is said so in books. Who denies that good conduct is good or that it will eventually lead you to the goal? Good conduct or *sat karma* purifies the *chitta* or mind and gives you *chitta suddhi*. The pure mind attains *jnana*, which is what is meant by salvation. So, eventually *jnana* must be reached, *i.e*., the ego must be traced to its source. But to those to whom this does not appeal, we have to say *sat karmas* lead to *chitta suddhi*, and *chitta suddhi* will lead to right knowledge or *jnana*, and that in its turn gives salvation."

1-1-47

An old lady, a Brahmin widow, was talking to Bhagavan in the hall, recollecting various incidents connected with her family and Bhagavan, during Bhagavan's stay in Virupakshi Cave and Skandasramam. Thereupon I asked T.S.R. who the lady was. He said she was the widow of one Mr. Venkatramier of Madura who stayed with Bhagavan for a long time and was greatly attached to Bhagavan. Thereupon Bhagavan asked me, "Haven't you met him? His photo must be in our groups in the *Life*." I said "No". Then Bhagavan asked T.S.R. to get a copy of the first edition of *Self-Realisation* by B.V.N., took out a group photo (second *Jayanti*) and showed us the above Mr. V. Iyer in that group.

The lady began singing some Tamil songs. Among them were *Ramana Stuti Panchakam* songs. In this connection T.S.R. asked Bhagavan how many times the author of those songs had visited Bhagavan, and where he was now. Bhagavan replied,

"He came only once when we were at the Virupakshi Cave. The first four songs, he wrote while he was here, one each day of his stay, and the fifth, the *sadguru* song, he sent after going to his place. He never again came here and we know nothing more about him. The day that he wrote the *kummi* song, Mr. M.V.Ramaswami Aiyar, probably Ramanatha Dikshitar, and others — all crazy chaps (*பைத்தியங்க*) — joined together at night and sang this song and did *kummi*."

Afterwards the lady began singing a few extracts from Bharati's 'Kannan' song. She began '*பிழைக்கும் வழி சொல்ல வேண்டுமென்றுல்*'. At once, Bhagavan asked the lady, "Do you know Alamelu? She used to sing this song." The lady replied, "Yes. I know. It is through her I got acquainted with this song," and continued her song.

I was going through a book on Ma Ananda Mayi, recently received by the Asramam. On pages 127-129 of the book the question is put as to whether she is to be deemed to be in the super-conscious state, knowing all, when she speaks in the ordinary way of the world, asking her disciples when they came, whether they have had their food, or how their family was, etc. She replied that in that super-conscious state there could be no conversation and no duality in fact; and that when she converses, she does so like other persons, and not with all knowledge. But she added, "There is another state when whatever I tell any particular person will be true." I asked Bhagavan what was this state and what was its name. Bhagavan said, "I don't know what they mean by it. Some are able to see what is hidden by time or space. But that is among the *siddhis* so called, and nothing to do with *jnana* or Liberation of the Perfected Being."

4-1-47

This afternoon T.S.R. was pasting, in the file opened for 1947, a copy of Uma's song printed for the coming *Jayanti*,

with Colombo K. Ramachandra's song at the top. Nagamma asked Bhagavan, "Has the song been printed? How has it been done, on a single sheet or as a folder?" Bhagavan replied, "It has been done as a small folder with K.R.'s song on top," and asked T.S.R. to show it to N. In this connection, Bhagavan told T.S.R., "K.R. has not put his signature to the song, but has subscribed himself as 'A devotee'. You may perhaps note down there 'K.Ramachandra' to indicate who the author was for any reference in the future."

Later, Bhagavan told me, "R.'s article has appeared in *The Sunday Times*." Bhagavan asked me to read it out for the benefit of all. R. had referred to *siddhis* as 'sub-normal powers'. With Bhagavan's approval, I corrected it into 'supra-normal powers'.

GLOSSARY

Abhaya : State of fearlessness; offering shelter to one who seeks refuge.

Abheda : Without difference.

Abheda buddhi : Concept free from ideas of difference.

Abhishekam : The sacred bath of water, milk, curd, etc., given to a deity.

Abhyasa : Practice.

Abhavam : Non-existence; absence.

Adhama : Inferior.

Adi : Beginning.

Advaita : Non-duality; no-otherness.

Advaitic : Pertaining to advaita.

Advaitin : One who believes in non-duality.

Aham : I; the ego.

Ahamkaram : Ego-sense.

Aham vritti : The 'I' thought.

Ajnana : Ignorance; nescience.

Akasa : Space; ether; sky; Brahman.

Ananda : Bliss.

Ananya bhakti : Whole-hearted devotion.

Angushtha-pramana: Of the size of the thumb.

Anta : The end.

Antaryami : The controller within us. God.

Anugraha : Blessing; grace.

Anupallavi : Sub-refrain of a song.

Apachara : Sacrilege.

Arati : The waving of lights before a sacred image.

Archana : Offering flowers to a sacred image.

Arupa manas : Mind which has no form or concept.

Asariri : Without body; a celestial voice.

Asat : Non-existence.

Ashta Dik Palakas: Protectors of eight quarters.

Ashta lingam : Eight lingams.

Ashta Vasus : Celestial beings who are eight in number.

Asti : Exists.

Asuric : Demoniac.

Atma : Self.

Atma-sakshatkaram: Perceiving (realizing) the Self directly.

Avadhuta : An ascetic who has given up everything including his clothes.

Avastha : State, especially the state of waking or dream or sleep.

Avatar : Incarnation; descent of God in a worldly form.

Avidya : Ignorance; nescience.

Aviyal : A South Indian preparation in which several kinds of vegetables are used.

Avyabhicharini bhakti: Bhakti which does not change from one object to another.

Bhagavat-Bhakta: One who is devoted to Bhagavan (Vishnu).

Bhajan : Singing devotional songs in chorus.

Bhakti : Devotion to a personal God.

Bhakti marga : The spiritual path of devotion to a personal God.

Bhakti rasa : The joy of bhakti.

Bhati : Shines, manifests, is aware.

Bhava : Feeling ; emotion.

Bheda bhava : A sense of separateness.

Bhiksha : *lit.* The food offered to begging ascetics in charity; a feast given to ascetics and other religious persons.

Bhoga Kshetra : A place of enjoyment.

Bhu : A sacred and symbolic syllable called a *vyahriti*.

Bhuvar : A sacred and symbolic syllable called a *vyahriti*.

Bindu : A dot; in yoga the dot over OM.

Brahmacharya : The first stage of life, the stage of the student.

Brahmajnana : Realization of Brahman.

Brahmakara vritti: Concept of the form of Brahman.

Buddhi : Intellect.

Chaitanya : Consciousness; sentience.

Chakora : A mythical bird which is to feed only on rain water.

Chakra : A yogic centre in the body.

Chalana : Movement.

Charanam : The body of a song.

Charya : Regular observance of rites.

Chattram : A place of free lodging for pilgrims and travellers. Sometimes food is also provided free.

Cheetah : A small leopard.

Chembu : A small round water pot made of brass or copper.

Chidabhasa : The reflected consciousness; the jiva.

Chidakasa : The akasa or ether or space in the heart; Brahman.

Chinmudra : The hand-pose indicating illumination.

Chiranjivi : One who lives for ever.

Chit : Consciousness.

Chit-Jada-granthi: The knot which ties the sentient (Self) and the inert (the body).

Chitta suddhi : Purity of mind.

Daharakasa : The tiny akasa; A term applied to the Self which is realized in the Heart.

Daivic : Godly; divine.

Darshan(a) : Seeing a holy person or image.

Dasara holidays : The ten days devoted to the worship of the Universal Mother.

Deham : Body.

Dehatma buddhi: The idea that the body is the Self.

Deva	:	A celestial being.
Dhoti	:	A long piece of cloth tied round the waist.
Dhyana	:	Meditation; contemplation.
Diksha (deeksha)	:	Formal initiation of a disciple by the Guru.
Dosai prasad	:	Prasad (Offering to God) consisting of *dosai*, a pancake made out of rice and blackgram.
Drishti srishti	:	Perception followed by creation.
Dvaita	:	Duality.
Dvaitic	:	Pertaining to dvaita.
Dvaitin	:	One who believes in duality.
Eka chintana	:	Concentrated thinking.
Ekagra bhakti	:	Complete devotion to one.
Ganjira	:	A tabor-like musical instrument.
Gayatri	:	A well-known Vedic mantra.
Giri Pradakshina	:	Going round the Hill.
Gokulashtami	:	The eighth lunar day on which Sri Krishna was born.
Gos(h)ala	:	A place where the cows are kept.
Gottuvadyam	:	A stringed musical instrument.
Grihapravesam	:	House warming.
Grihasta	:	One who is in the second stage of life, that of a householder.
Guna	:	Quality; mode.
Guru stuti	:	Praise of the Guru; verses in praise of the Guru.
Harikatha	:	A religious discourse interspersed with devotional songs.
Hasta diksha	:	Spiritual initiation in which the Guru places his hand on the head of the disciple.
Hastamalaka(m)	:	An amalaka fruit in the hand.
Hatha yoga	:	A form of yoga involving difficult bodily postures.
Homa	:	Sacrifice offered in the sacred fire.
Idam	:	This, usually applied in Vedanta to the world.

Ishta devata	:	The deity whom one desires to worship or contemplate.
Isvara	:	God.
Isvara maya	:	The maya (delusion) produced by God.
Isvaravadi	:	One who expounds the doctrine of a personal God.
Jada	:	The inert.
Jagrat	:	The waking state.
Japa	:	Repetition of a sacred word or syllable or the name of God.
Jada	:	Matted hair.
Jayanti	:	The birthday of a God or a holy person.
Jibba	:	A long, loose shirt without collar and cuffs.
Jiva	:	The individual.
Jivanmukta	:	One who is Liberated while alive.
Jivatman	:	The individual self.
Jnana	:	Knowledge; Wisdom; Enlightenment.
Jnanottara Bhakti:		Bhakti which follows Jnana.
Jutka	:	A carriage on two wheels drawn by a pony.
Jyoti	:	Effulgence.
Jyoti maya	:	Full of effulgence.
Kainkaryam	:	Service rendered to God, the Guru, etc.
Kalakshepam	:	A religious discourse interspersed with songs.
Kali yuga	:	The last of the four yugas (aeons).
Kamandala(m)	:	A receptacle for holding water used by ascetics and generally made out of the shell of a large coconut.
Kanji	:	Gruel.
Kashaya	:	Taint; impurity.
Kattalai	:	Offerings made to a temple at regular times by a devotee.
Kayakalpa	:	A medicinal preparation for longevity.

Kirtan	:	A devotional song.
Koham	:	Who am I?
Kripa	:	Mercy.
Kripa drishti	:	Look of mercy or grace.
Kriya	:	An act.
Kshetra	:	A field; a place; the body.
Kshira sagara	:	The ocean of milk in which Vishnu lies on a serpent with a thousand hoods.
Kummi	:	A song which accompanies a kind of rustic dance.
Kumkum(am)	:	Vermilion applied to the forehead, generally by women.
Kundalini	:	The mystic circle of three and a half coils situated in the umbilical region. The yogic principle of Serpent power. The Primordial Maya.
Kuvalaya	:	The lotus.
Laya	:	Dissolution; absorption.
Lila	:	Sport.
Lingam	:	Symbol; the symbol of Siva.
Lingamaya	:	Full of lingas.
Madhu	:	Honey; enjoyment.
Madhu Vidya	:	The name of a spiritual and esoteric practice.
Madhwada	:	One who enjoys the good and bad things in the world; the jiva.
Madhyama	:	Middling.
Maha Prana	:	The important life-force.
Manana	:	Reflection on what has been heard.
Manas	:	Mind.
Manasa japam	:	Japam done mentally.
Mangalam	:	Auspicious.
Manigar	:	The person in charge of an institution.
Mano nasa	:	The extinction of the mind.

Mantapam	:	A raised platform of stone covered over with an ornamental roof supported by pillars.
Manthi	:	A grown up male monkey.
Mantra	:	A sacred word or words supposed to have spiritual potency.
Mantra japam	:	Repetition of mantra.
Mantramaya	:	Full of mantra.
Marundu	:	Medicinal preparation.
Mattu Pongal day:		The day on which the cows are venerated.
Mauna (mowna):		Silence.
Mayavadi	:	One who expounds the doctrine of maya.
Megha	:	Cloud.
Megha mandala	:	A bank of clouds.
Mithya	:	Unreal; false.
Moham	:	Delusion.
Moharrum	:	A Muslim festival.
Moksha	:	Liberation.
Mridangam	:	A small drum which is struck with the fingers of both the hands and used in South Indian Musical Concerts.
Mudra	:	Pose of the hands.
Mukta	:	One who is liberated.
Mukti	:	Liberation.
Muladhara	:	The name of the lowest Yogic chakra or centre.
Mumukshu	:	One who desires to be Liberated.
Nada	:	Sound; in yoga the sound represented by OM.
Nadi	:	River.
Nadi	:	Yogic nerve.
Nadi horoscope	:	A system of astrology.
Naham	:	I am not the body.
Naivedya(m)	:	Food offered to a God at the time of worship.
Nakshatra	:	A star; an asterism.

Nama : Name.

Nama smarana : Repetition of the name of God.

Navami : The ninth lunar day.

Nididhyasana : Uninterrupted contemplation.

Nirvikalpa samadhi: Samadhi in which all differences between the individual self and Brahman cease to exist.

Nishkama karma: Action done without a selfish motive.

Nitya karma : The daily rites which are obligatory.

Niyati : Law; rule; established order.

Om(kar) : The sacred syllable which represents Brahman.

Padaiveedu : A temple or shrine built on the site of a battle fought by gods with demons.

Padmasanam : The lotus-posture of sitting for meditation.

Pakva : Fit; proper; mature.

Pallavi : Refrain in a piece of music.

Paramatma(n) : The Supreme Self; Brahman.

Parayana : The chanting of the Vedas.

Pathasala : A school, especially one in which boys are taught to chant the Vedas.

Pipal : A sacred tree; the *ficus religiosa*.

Poli : A North Indian preparation made of wheat flour fried in ghee.

Pongal : A South Indian preparation made of rice, pulses, nuts, ghee, etc.

Pongal Prasadam: Pongal offered to God.

Pooran poli : A North Indian sweet preparation.

Pradakshina : Going round a sacred object or person.

Prakara : The paved yard surrounding the shrine in a temple.

Prakriti : Nature; compound of the three gunas, satva, rajas and tamas.

Prana : Life-force; the vital airs, breath.

Pranayama : Regulation or control of breath.

Prarabdha : That part of one's karma which has to be worked out in this life.

Prasad(am) : Food distributed to devotees after it is offered to God, the Guru, etc.

Pratyaksha : Direct; immediate.

Pravritti : Activity.

Prayaschittam : An expiatory act.

Priyam : Bliss.

Puja : Ceremonial worship with flowers, water, etc.

Punarvasu : The name of an asterism.

Punya : Merit; the result of a good deed.

Puranas : Ancient poems containing mythological stories, legends, etc.

Purusha : Man; the Self.

Purushottama : The best of men; an epithet of God.

Ramamaya : Full of Rama.

Sadhana : Spiritual practice.

Sadhu : An ascetic; a sannyasin.

Sadguru : The Self-realized Guru.

Sahaja samadhi : Samadhi which is natural and constant.

Sahaja sthiti : Natural state.

Sadhak(a) : An aspirant; one who follows a spiritual discipline.

Sahasrara : The lotus of the thousand petals; the topmost yogic centre situated in the head.

Sakshat(kara) : Direct perception.

Sakti : Power; Energy.

Samasanam : *See* Sama asraya.

Sama asraya(m) : Vaishnava method of initiation.

Samkalpa : Idea, concept; imagination.

Samsara : Cycle of births and deaths.

Samskara : impression.

Samudra(m)	:	Ocean.
Sanchitakarma	:	Karma which has been accumulated in former lives and which has not yet taken effect.
Sandal	:	A fragrant paste made by rubbing a piece of sandalwood on a rough and moist stone.
Sandhi	:	Conjunction, especially of syllables and words.
Sannyasa	:	Asceticism; the fourth stage of life.
S(h)anti	:	Peace; tranquillity.
Sastra	:	Scripture; a science.
Sannyasi	:	An ascetic; a person belonging to the fourth stage of life.
Sariram	:	Body.
Sat	:	Existence; being.
Satavadhana	:	Attending to various things at one and the same time.
Sat Karma	:	Good or meritorious acts.
Sat sang	:	Contact with good or pious persons.
Satakam	:	A poem of one hundred stanzas.
Satvic	:	Good; wholesome; possessing the quality of satva.
Satya yuga	:	The first of the four yugas (aeons).
Siddhi	:	Supernatural attainment.
Siva lingam	:	The symbol of Siva which is an object of worship.
Sivanamavali	:	Repetition of the names of Siva.
Sloka	:	A stanza in Sanskrit poetry.
Soham	:	I am He.
Sphurana	:	Manifestation.
Sravana	:	Hearing, especially the sacred truth.
Srishti	:	Creation.
Srishti drishti	:	Creation followed by perception.
Sruti	:	That which is heard or revealed; inspired words, generally applied to the Vedas.
Sthalapurana	:	The legend of a sacred place.

Sthapati : An architect of temples and other sacred structures.

Sthitaprajna : One who is stable in intelligence; a Self-realized Sage.

Stotram : A hymn of praise.

Suddha manas : Pure mind; mind without concepts.

Sukshma : Subtle.

Sukshma sarira : The subtle body.

Sushumna nadi : A yogic nerve.

Sushupti : The state of deep and dreamless sleep.

Sushupti ananda : The bliss experienced in sushupti

Sutra : Aphoristic words or phrases.

Suvar : A sacred syllable known as a vyahriti.

Svabhavasthiti : Natural state.

Svanubhava : One's own experience.

Svarga loka : The world of the Personal God.

Swarupa : Nature; form; Self.

Taila : Medicated oil.

Tapal(s) : Mail; the post.

Tapam : Heat.

Tapas : Austerities; severe spiritual discipline.

Tapasvi : One who performs tapas.

Tapasya : *See* Tapas.

Tat : That; Brahman.

Tattwa : Truth; significance.

Thai : The name of a Tamil month corresponding to the middle of January to the middle of February.

Thai poosam : The day on which the moon is in conjunction with the asterism Pushya in the Tamil month of Thai.

Thengalai : A sect among the Vishnu Worshippers.

Thevaram : Songs composed by important Tamil Saints which are venerated like Vedas.

Tithi : A lunar day.

Tope : A grove of trees.

Triputi : A triad like knower, known and knowledge.

Tulsi : A sacred plant.

Turiya : The fourth state which is beyond the three states of waking, dream and dreamless sleep.

Turiya ananda : Bliss experienced in the state of turiya, the fourth state, Brahman.

Turiyatita : Beyond turiya, the fourth state beyond waking, dream and dreamless sleep.

Upades(h) : Spiritual instruction.

Upadhi : An adjunct.

Upadhi ananda : Bliss which is caused by an adjunct.

Upasana : Contemplation of a deity or word or syllable like Om.

Uppuma : A South Indian preparation made of semolina or broken rice.

Uttama : Superior; the best.

Vadai : A South Indian preparation of blackgram dough which is fried in oil.

Vaikasi : The name of a Tamil month corresponding to the middle of May to the middle of June.

Vairagya : Dispassion.

Varnasrama (dharma): The order of castes and stages of life; the duties pertaining to the several castes and order of life.

Vasana : Inherent tendency.

Vibhuti : Sacred ashes.

Vichara : Enquiry.

Vichara marga : The path of enquiry.

Videha mukti : Liberation after death.

Vidya : A spiritual and esoteric discipline.

Vikalpa	:	Doubt; wrong concept.
Vikshepa	:	Tossing to and fro.
Vimanam	:	The upper portion of the tower of a temple; a celestial car.
Viparita	:	Contrary.
Viparita buddhi	:	A wrong conception.
Visishtadvaita	:	Advaita in a modified form.
Viyoga	:	Separation.
Vrata	:	A rite; an observance.
Vritti	:	An idea, a thought.
Yajna	:	Ritualistic sacrifice.
Yama	:	Control.
Yama	:	the god of death.
Yathartham	:	Truth; a thing as such.
Yoga nidra	:	Yogic sleep.
Yuga	:	A long period of time consisting of thousands of years (aeons).

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